



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Forest  
Service**

**Pacific  
Southwest  
Region**

**R5-MB-057  
September 2004**



# **Business Plan for the Lassen National Forest**



## **A Window of Opportunity**

# Welcome to the Lassen National Forest

For the last one hundred years, the Lassen National Forest has served the needs of local and national communities. As a new century of service dawns, partnerships continue to grow and enhance our limited resources, providing opportunities and services we all have come to know.



Cover photo was taken near Ruffa Ranch along the Butt Creek Valley on the Almanor Ranger District

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# Introduction

The USDA Forest Service Business Plan Initiative (BPI) was designed to promote the long term health of our national forests through the development of improved financial planning and management tools. The BPI is a joint effort of the USDA Forest Service and the National Parks Conservation Association's Center for Park Management.

Business planning within the Forest Service is used to improve the abilities of national forests to clearly communicate their financial status to principal stakeholders. This plan demonstrates the functional responsibilities, operational standards, and financial position of the Lassen National Forest.

A business plan answers such questions as:

- What is the business of the Forest unit?
- What critical functions do not occur due to a lack of funding?
- How much money does the Forest need to operate at appropriate standards?

The business planning process is undertaken to accomplish three main tasks. First, it provides the forest with a synopsis of the forest's funding history. Second, it presents a clear, detailed picture of the state of current forest operations and funding. Finally, it outlines forest priorities and funding and operational strategies.

Five national forests from the Pacific Southwest Region – The Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Sequoia and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit – have applied a common methodology to develop their business plans. Forest activities were organized into six functional areas, which describe all areas of the business for which a forest is responsible. The functional areas were then broken down into 34 programs. This allows the Forest to move beyond the traditional Forest Service method of reporting expenditures in terms of fund sources, and instead report expenditures in terms of activities. As a result, the Forest can communicate its financial situation more clearly with external audiences. Furthermore, using the same program structure for all forests provides a needed measure of comparability across forest units.

Completing the business plan process not only enables a forest to produce a powerful communications tool, but also provides forest staff with financial and operational baseline knowledge for future decision-making.

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## Forest Supervisor's Foreword



Forest Supervisor Edward C. Cole

Lassen National Forest is one of 155 national forests across the United States and one of 18 national forests in California. It lies at the crossroads of the Modoc Plateau, the Great Basin, the Cascade Range, and the Sierra Nevada Mountains in northeast California. The Lassen National Forest is a tremendous public asset that provides a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, raw materials such as timber and livestock forage, habitat for an abundance of wildlife, clean water for cities and agriculture, and spectacular scenic beauty.

The management of an area as large as the Lassen National Forest (1.2 million acres) is complex. The Lassen provides a wide variety of benefits and opportunities, the supply of which is limited. The demands of a growing population continue to raise issues on how publicly owned lands should be managed. These lands are your lands and I know you care deeply about how the Forest Service manages them.

We are encouraged by the fact that people locally, as well as from around the country, have demonstrated commitment to addressing natural resource management issues. For instance, local and national stakeholders continually request that we provide sustainable wildlife habitat for threatened and endangered species.

The public has also expressed concern about community stability and local economic development, and we remain mindful of how our forest policies affect local economies.

These are exciting and challenging times for natural resource managers. The demands of a growing population may eventually reach the point of exceeding the supply of resources which the national forests can provide. With limited resources, financial

and human, we have to make choices about what we can provide to the public. Through this business plan, we are identifying priorities for management, as we see them, which will carry us through the next decade. We will also identify what funds and resources will be required to achieve the goals of this forest. Our success in managing this national treasure will ultimately be dependent on our ability to communicate and collaborate with our partners and the public.

The National Parks Conservation Association has provided the catalyst and experience to help us develop this plan. With their assistance, we are now in a position to address the discrepancy between available resources and the public's needs. But, it will be through the public's continued interest, involvement, and support that we are able to make sound decisions about these lands.

Our ultimate goal remains to provide future generations with the same opportunities and experiences that we have enjoyed.

Edward C. Cole  
Forest Supervisor  
January 2000 - May 2004

## A Vision for the Future

During the business plan process, the Forest Leadership Team met over an intensive two day period to review the consultants' initial findings and use those to develop forest strategies. The team first discussed the Forest Service Chief's four major threats to the national forests and how the business plan would align with his vision. The four threats include: fire and fuels; invasive species; loss of open space and habitat fragmentation; and unmanaged outdoor recreation (especially off-highway vehicle use). The Lassen's strategies were designed to address these challenges as well as support the six goals outlined in the Forest Service Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2004 - 2008. The Forest Leadership Team developed three objectives along with proposed strategies to meet them.

These objectives are:

- 1) Aggressively restore and maintain healthy and sustainable ecosystems
- 2) Improve operational efficiencies
- 3) Build partnerships and relationships



Nesting Osprey at Eagle Lake

The table below matches the Agency's Strategic Plan for 2004 - 2008 to Lassen's corresponding forest specific strategies.

### FS Strategic Plan Goals (2004 - 2008)

### Lassen National Forest Strategic Goals

Reduce the risk from catastrophic wildland fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aggressively restore and maintain healthy and sustainable ecosystems.</li> </ul>
Reduce the impacts from invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aggressively restore and maintain healthy and sustainable ecosystems</li> </ul>
Provide outdoor recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve operational efficiencies.</li> <li>▪ Build partnerships and relationships.</li> </ul>
Help meet energy and ecosystem resource needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aggressively restore and maintain healthy and sustainable ecosystems.</li> <li>▪ Improve operational efficiencies.</li> </ul>
Improve watershed condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aggressively restore and maintain healthy and sustainable ecosystems</li> </ul>
Mission related work in addition to that which supports agency goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build partnerships and relationships.</li> </ul>

Chief's four threats include fire & fuels; invasive species; loss of open space & habitat fragmentation; & unmanaged recreation & off-highway vehicle use.

### Mission Statement

"The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."

## Executive Summary



variable checkerspot

The Business Plan Initiative assesses individual forest needs through the development of a strategic business plan. The main goal of the plan is to help national forest officers translate financial and operational management into a language that all forest stakeholders can understand.

Two business consultants worked over an 11-week period with the Forest Leadership Team, including program managers, District Rangers and the Forest Supervisor. The consultants analyzed the Forest on both a program level as well as at an organizational level.

The first half of the project was devoted to interviewing individual program managers and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their program areas. Consultants gathered information that focused on the use of Forest funds; the standards needed to maintain the vitality of forest resources; and the gaps between existing funding and the demonstrated need. The final portion of the analysis was dedicated to prioritizing investment needs; designing strategies to meet current unfunded needs; and identifying potential partners with whom to collaborate.

### Budget Outlook

The Lassen will most certainly be affected by the regional budget, which is slated to decrease by 60 million dollars by Fiscal Year (FY) 2006. The potential for regional funding shortfalls only exacerbates the tenuous nature of congressional appropriations. Funding for the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Act pilot program, which comprised 25 percent of the Lassen's FY 2003 budget, is only mandated through FY 2009. This reality combined with the aggressive fuels targets set by the Sierra Nevada Framework and National Fire Plan

challenge the Forest to treat more acres. The national threats to national forest land including off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, invasive species, land-use change and fire must also be addressed by individual forests regardless of appropriated dollars towards these areas.

### Investment Priorities

Through the business plan process, the Forest Leadership Team was able to identify and prioritize investment needs. For the purpose of this plan, an investment refers to one-time capital or non-capital expenditures or expenditures towards knowledge acquisition. The investments highlighted in this plan currently have no identified funding source. The Lassen has committed to making substantial investments in:

- Deferred maintenance and facilities needs for administrative, fire, and recreation use
- Deferred maintenance for the transportation system
- Land adjustment transactions
- Wildlife habitat improvements
- Partnerships that support resource management goals

In light of the tenuous funding landscape and the management challenges on the horizon, the Lassen has committed to aligning their organization so that they are better equipped to take advantage of partnership opportunities. Conservation strategies for resource management will also be emphasized as they offer the opportunity to build relationships with the public through cooperative management of the land. The Lassen will also devote resources towards defining the capacity of the land so that they are in a position to act proactively instead of reactively. And finally, the Forest will focus on internal synergies across program areas with data management so that all projects and activities are evaluated holistically for the benefit of the land and of the people.

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The regional budget change will affect Lassen, by eliminating 60 million dollars by Fiscal Year (FY) 2006.

## Forest Overview

The Lassen National Forest lies at the heart of one of the most fascinating areas of California, called the Crossroads. Here the granite of the Sierra Nevada, the lava of the Cascades and the Modoc Plateau, and the sagebrush of the Great Basin meet and blend. It is an area of great variety, greeting visitors and residents alike with a wide array of recreational opportunities and adventures. Fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, bicycling, boating, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and pondering the wonder of nature are among the many popular pastimes.

The Lassen National Forest was designated as a Forest Reserve in 1905 for its timber and range resources. Prior to its designation as public land, local explorers and residents alike enjoyed the resources of the Forest: Trappers in the 1820s and 30s frequently followed the Pit River and its tributaries to the Sacramento River. Following the discovery of gold in the late 1840s, famous overland trails were developed across the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains into the local area. Ranching became an enterprise in the late 1850s when settlers were attracted to the high mountain meadows. In the 1870s, timber logged by the large railroad companies supplied the need of a newly expanding California. In the early 1900s, the Forest Reserve was an important source of lumber for building construction and other uses such as all-purpose boxes and fruit crates.

In 1920, the U.S. Forest Service established “working circles” designated national forest timber stands, which served regional lumber mills for the purpose of stabilizing local economies. The Lassen participated in the Eastern Lassen Working Circle and helped facilitate large-scale timber sales with companies such as the Lassen Lumber and Box Company. These types of business relationships were intact until the 1950s.

The Lassen National Forest encompasses 1.2 million acres or 1,875 square miles of land. The Forest is bounded by the Pit River watershed on the north and the North Fork River of the Feather River on the south. The slopes of the Cascade Range and the Sierra Nevada mountains characterize the western portion of the Forest. Eagle Lake and the old lake beds of Honey Lake and



View of South End of Eagle Lake and Papoose Meadows on the Eagle Lake Ranger District

Grasshopper Valleys lie on the eastern periphery. The Lassen includes a portion of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway, designated as an All American Road. The American Heritage Trail and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail as well as over 55,000 acres of lakes and 1,650 miles of streams including 350 miles of trout streams are also within the Forest.

Coniferous forest vegetation dominates the landscape of the Lassen, but the forest as a whole includes incredibly diverse ecosystems with desirable habitat for a variety of wildlife. Stands of late seral coniferous forest, for instance, provide ideal habitat for such sensitive species as the California spotted owl, the Pacific fisher and the American marten. Other ecosystems within the Forest provide a home for additional noteworthy wildlife species such as the bald eagle, northern spotted owl, winter-run steelhead and Sierra Nevada red fox. In all, the Lassen is home to 361 animal species and 29 fish species.



The Lassen was the home to Ishi, a member of the Yahi Yana Native American group who was the last survivor of a tribe that flourished in the area more than 3,000 years ago.

Photo Courtesy of James Holden



Black Rock on edge of the Ishi Wilderness

The Lassen National Forest is also rich in indigenous cultural history. The Lassen holds the distinction of being home to Ishi, a member of the Yahi Yana Native American group who was the last survivor of a tribe that flourished in the area more than 3,000 years ago. As a group, the Yahi became extinct after the European settlers conquered their territory in the mid to late 1800s. Ishi, which means "man" in the Yahi language, hid for many years in this wild and desolate place with only a few people, mostly family members, as company. After becoming separated from his companions, Ishi walked out of the woods into Euro-American society in 1911. Communicating in his native language with a U.C. Berkeley professor, Ishi was able to share a wealth of information about his tribe and the history of the area. The Lassen also contains traditional use areas of the Mountain Maidu, Pit River, and Paiute Tribes. Their cultures live on through these areas and enrich forest management.

Within the Lassen National Forest you can explore a lava tube or the land of Ishi; watch pronghorn antelope glide across sage flats or an osprey fish from lake waters; drive four-wheel roads into high granite country covered with sapphire lakes or discover spring wildflowers on foot. The Lassen is a land of many jewels and uses.

## Lassen National Forest Inventory

As of FY 2003

### General

Acres of land:	1,200,000
Districts:	Eagle Lake, Hat Creek, Almanor
Permanent employees:	304 with approximately 66 vacancies
Temporary or seasonal employees:	200
Approximate volunteer hours:	8,663
Average annual water yield:	1,508,000 acre-feet

### Recreation Resources

Wilderness areas:	3
Developed recreational sites:	150
Family campgrounds:	48
Group campgrounds:	4
Campsites:	
Eagle Lake:	325
Hat Creek:	179
Almanor:	434
Day use and picnic areas:	6
Boat launches:	3
Recreational residences:	399
Interpretive sites:	13
Visitor centers:	4
Special Interest Areas:	7

### Trails and Roads

Trails:	819 miles
National Recreational Trails:	56 miles
Historic Trails:	2
Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail:	125 miles
Trailheads:	38
Nordic Touring Areas:	5
Snowmobile Staging Areas:	6
Classified Roads:	3,656 miles
National Scenic Byway:	185
Backcountry Discovery Trail	187

## Natural Resources

Miles of streams:	1,650
Acres of lakes:	56,700 acres
Candidate Wild and Scenic Rivers:	3
Deer Creek, Mill Creek, and Antelope Creek	
Highest point:	Crater Peak at 8,677 feet
<b>Wildlife Species:</b>	
Sensitive bird species:	6
northern goshawk, Swainson's hawk, willow flycatcher, greater sandhill crane, great gray owl, California spotted owl	
Sensitive mammal species:	7
Pallid bat, Townsends big-eared bat, California wolverine, western red bat, American marten, Pacific fisher, Sierra Nevada red fox	
Sensitive amphibian species:	3
foothill yellow-legged frog, mountain yellow-legged frog, Cascade frog	
Sensitive reptile species:	1
Northwestern pond turtle	
Sensitive aquatic invertebrates:	5
California floater (freshwater mussel), Great Basin rams-horn (snail), scalloped juga (snail), Topaz juga (snail), montane peaclam	
Sensitive inland and anadromous fish:	3
Eagle Lake rainbow trout, Central Valley spring-run Chinook, Central Valley fall-run Chinook	
Sensitive plant species:	27

## Threaten and endangered species:

Wildlife:	6
Bald eagle, Northern Spotted Owl, winter-run steelhead, spring-run Chinook salmon, California red-legged frog, Shasta crayfish	
Plants:	2
Slender Orcutt grass, Greene's tuctoria	
Grazing Allotments:	44
Active Grazing Allotments:	25

## Heritage Resources

Archeological sites:	2,989
National Register sites:	10
National Register eligible sites:	133

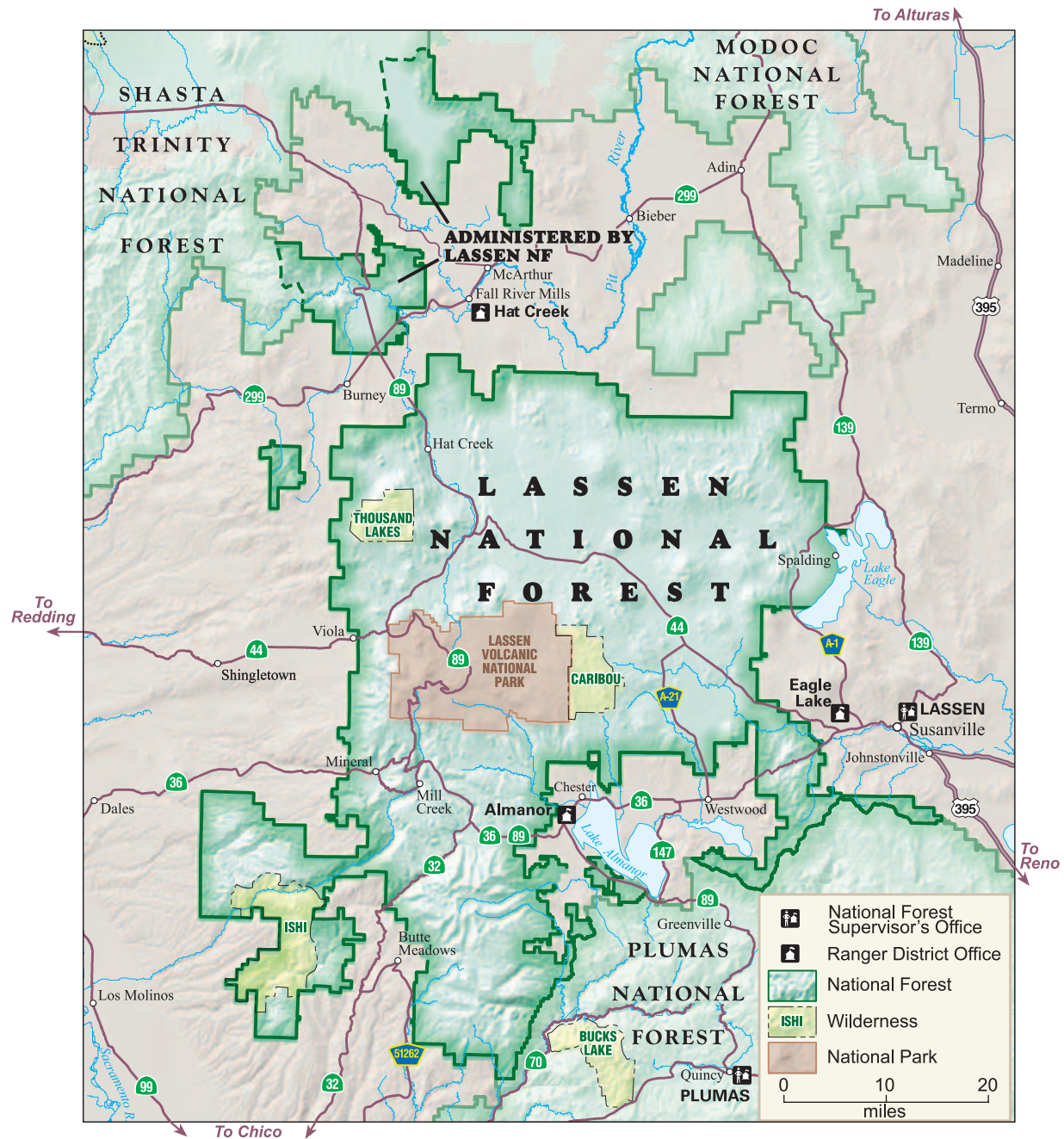
## Infrastructure

Total buildings:	330
Management offices:	15
Barracks, residences, or trailer pads:	25
Maintenance buildings:	5
Utility buildings:	14
Fire stations:	7
All with Lassen National Forest engines	
Active fire lookouts:	5
West Prospect, Burney Mountain, Colby Mountain, Antelope Mountain, Harvey Mountain	
Air base: Chester	1
Dams:	37
Bridges:	29
Major culverts:	67

## Equipment

Fire engines:	15
Water tenders:	3
Crew carriers and Helitenders:	7
Chippers:	1
Slip-in pumper units:	7
All-terrain vehicles:	19
Heavy equipment, trucks, and trailers:	26
Remaining fleet vehicles:	262

# Lassen National Forest Map



# Historical Context

## Founding Legislation

The Lassen National Forest was designated as Lassen Peak Forest Reserve on June 2, 1905 by President Theodore Roosevelt for its timber and range resources. In 1908, another proclamation created the Lassen National Forest. The Forest was named after Peter Lassen, a historical figure who founded one of the earliest area emigrant trails: the Lassen Trail. In 1844, Mr. Lassen obtained a land grant for a ranch in the vicinity of Deer Creek and became motivated to find a short cut across the forest area. In 1848, Mr. Lassen led his first group of emigrants from Missouri to the Sacramento Valley. Following the Pit River for much of the journey, the trip along Lassen's trail was a long one – taking on average about a month. However, for a period it was widely traveled. It is calculated that as many as 6,000 people used the Lassen Trail en route to the gold fields in 1849.

## Other Significant Legislation & Management Direction

**The Northwest Forest Plan** amended the Forest Plans of 10 National Forests and seven Bureau of Land Management Districts in 1994. Approximately, 36,592 acres of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, generally north of Pit River and administered by the Lassen, are included in this decision. The Plan provides a comprehensive ecosystem management strategy for the conservation of late-seral forests and their dependent species including the Northern Spotted Owl. The 1994 Plan has since been amended several times to modify or clarify the standards and guidelines.



L.A. Barrett – First Lassen NF Supervisor

**The Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act (HFQLG)** became law as part of the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. In October 1998, the HFQLG required the Forest Service to conduct a pilot project for the Lassen and Plumas National Forests, and Sierraville District of the Tahoe National Forest. The Pilot Project is designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of specific resource management activities including fuelbreaks, group selection, individual tree selection, avoidance or protection of specified areas, and implementing a watershed restoration program. The Pilot Project landbase covers approximately 1.5 million acres within the three national forests. The Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Environmental

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Impact Statement (FEIS) for Pilot Project implementation were released in August 1999. In 2000, a five-year program of work was drafted which outlines annual project targets. Key goals of the Pilot Project include:

- The Pilot Project calls for treating 40,000 to 60,000 acres annually through the creation of fuelbreaks, called Defensible Fuel Profile Zones (DFPZs); and 8,700 acres per year through small group selection harvest.
- The Project aims to protect streamside and aquatic ecosystems within the Pilot Project area through the use of specific guidelines for riparian and watershed protection, called the Scientific Analysis Team (SAT) guidelines.
- The Project provides guidelines that address important environmental concerns such as species viability.

**The Sierra Nevada Framework Record of Decision**, which was signed in 2001 and further amended in January 2004, applies to eleven national forests in the Sierra Nevada Range. It defines how individual forests will meet National Fire Plan objectives as well as those of HFQLG. The decision emphasizes for ecological restoration to reduce the incidence of wildfires and resulting impacts on forest resources and neighboring communities. The Framework predicts that over the next 50 years, the acres burned by severe wildfires should be reduced by more than 30 percent. For communities that lie adjacent to national forest land, fuels will be reduced on 700,000 wildland/urban interface (WUI) acres over the next 20 years. To meet the goals of this decision, aggressive tree-thinning, and prescribed burning activities must occur.

### Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) & Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA)

The Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) was launched in 2002 to reduce administrative process delays in implementing projects that treat hazardous fuels and restore healthy ecological conditions. The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 contains a variety of provisions to expedite hazardous fuel reduction and forest restoration projects in areas at high risk of wildland fire or insect and disease epidemics. These high risk areas include WUIs, municipal watersheds, habitat for threatened and endangered species, and areas where fuel loads far exceed natural levels.



West side of Crater Mountain -1915 Eagle Lake Ranger District

## Fund Source Analysis

National forests acquire funds from three principal sources. The first source is appropriations by Congress to the USDA Forest Service. The amount of the appropriation varies from year to year at the national level. Appropriated funds are allocated to the regional level and then down to each individual national forest. The appropriated base budget provides the largest portion of the forest's total annual budget. The Forest uses appropriated funds primarily to pay for operational needs.

The second funding source is reimbursable income, collected from other organizations, usually other government agencies, for services rendered by Forest employees. A portion comes from private and nonprofit organizations that fund activities on the forest such as monitoring special use permit activities.

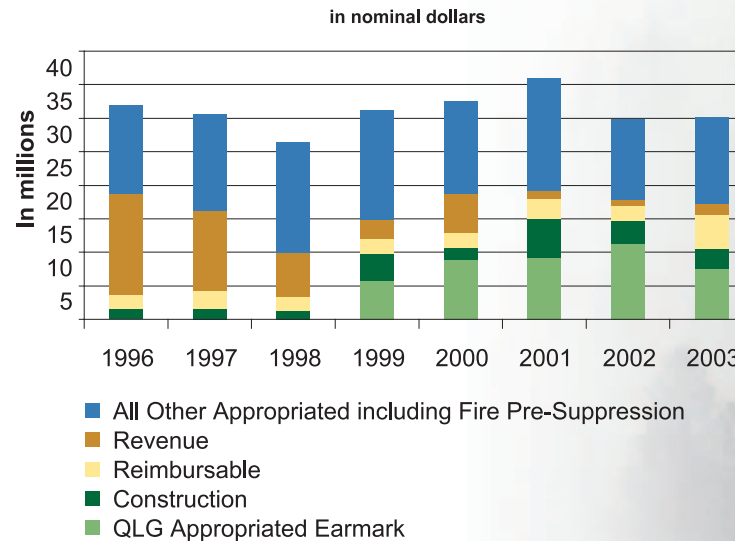
The third funding source is revenue. This source of funding has become increasingly important, as it can be used for a wider range of purposes than reimbursable revenue and has helped to supplement appropriated funds. The Forest receives revenue from a variety of sources including permits, donations and services. Revenue sources include recreation and non-recreational special uses such as concession-operated campgrounds and communication sites. The Forest does not retain the majority of the revenue generated by commercial activities. These proceeds are deposited in the U.S. Treasury in accordance with existing law.

Funding changes directly impact the Forest Service's ability to meet its mission statement and goals. The FY 2003 funding was six percent less than the monies available in FY 1996, but more importantly, the funding source has shifted dramatically.

Trust Funds are Knudson-Vandenberg (KV), Brush Disposal (BD), Salvage Sale Fund (SSF), and Restoration Trust (RTRT) and is revenue retained in trust for specific purposes for resource enhancements. In FY 1996, Trust Funds primarily derived from commercial timber sales were 44 percent of Lassen National Forest's available budget. By FY 2003, the Trust Funds dwindled to five percent.

Construction funds fluctuate from year to year based on the Forest's ability to compete under the Region's Capital Investment Program. Funds are used to maintain, construct or reconstruct forest roads, trails, recreation and administrative facilities.

**Fund Source by Fiscal Year  
& Excluding National Fire & Disaster Support**



National forests acquire funds from three principle sources: appropriations by Congress to the USDA Forest Service; reimbursable income collected from other organizations; and revenue.

Earmarks are special allocations from Congress targeted at specific projects or regions. The earmarked HFQLG funds supplemented the budget and comprised 24 percent of overall funding. At this time, this is the largest earmark in the National Forest System. The remaining base appropriated funding, which includes the fire budget has remained flat, although the fire's program portion has grown.

Funding in FY 2002 and FY 2003 was affected by "fire-borrowing," in which money appropriated to the Forest is reallocated nationally towards fighting wildfires. When fire-borrowed funds are pulled from earmarks, the money has been paid back to the Pilot Project. This was the case for the Lassen, since most of the funds drawn were from the HFQLG earmarked hazardous fuels treatment budget. When fire-borrowed funds are pulled from non-earmarked programs, only a portion of these funds may be returned to the Forest. This further erodes the Lassens' ability to implement planned projects associated with all other resource programs.

## Changes in Forest Consumers

Historically, there has been an economic benefit derived from natural resource management in rural America. Special-use permit holders, such as power companies and concessionaires, along with lumber mills depend on the use of Lassen National Forest resources to earn a profit.

As the graph: National Timber Related Revenue Trend below depicts, timber sales earned over \$12 million for the United States Treasury ten years ago, but have since sharply declined. Falling prices driven by modernization and foreign competition diminished the return from timber harvesting while forests nationwide began to focus on conservation and sustaining natural forest variability. The timber extracted today, aimed at reducing forest fuels, is primarily comprised of smaller diameter trees sold to lumber mills and energy-producing plants.

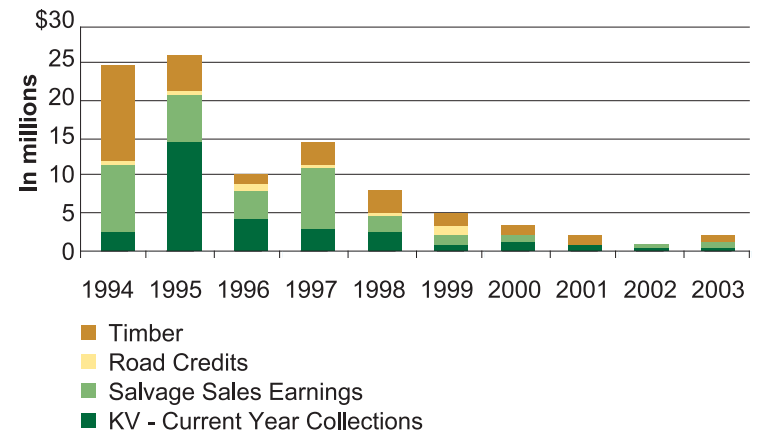
Knudson and Vandenberg Act authorized the Forest Service to retain receipts to rehabilitate renewable resources in a timber sale area. KV collections have declined in recent years for a couple of reasons. Timber sale volumes and values have fallen as a result of more emphasis placed on commercial and pre-commercial thinning, and the removal of small, low value products.

Thinnings are primarily in second-growth stands and are comprised of small-diameter material with less value and limited use. The management focus today is on what we leave versus what we remove. Biomass is a term used to describe material too small to be made into boards. Biomass can be clean chips used to



Load of sawlogs

**Timber Related Revenue Trend**



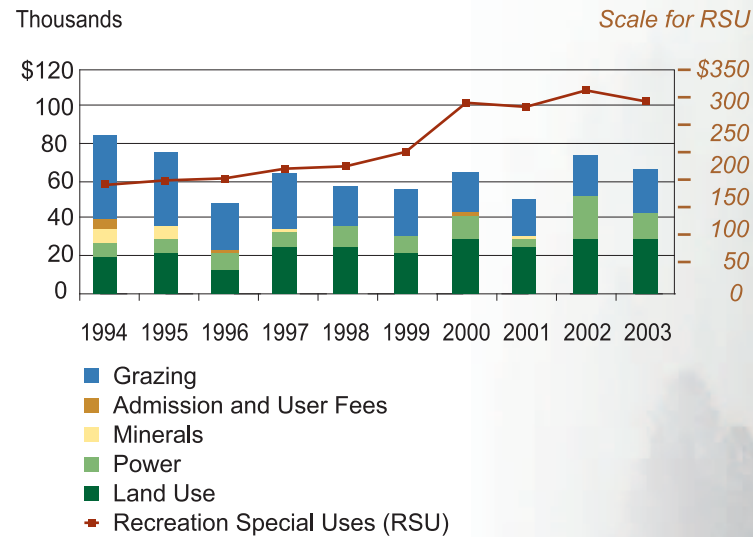


Crater Lake on the Eagle Lake Ranger District

manufacture other products such as particle board. Hog fuel is tops and limbs used for energy production. With the emphasis on ecological restoration and forest health, thinnings are the primary tool to achieve these goals. Thinnings make forest stands more resilient to withstand fire, insect and diseases but do not generate the magnitude of receipts that were historically generated from earlier timber sales.

The Non-timber Related Revenue graph shows a diminishing trend of grazing and mineral extraction use, but an increase in revenues from recreational use, primarily due to increased annual fees collected for the use of recreation residences. The impact from increased off highway vehicle use in the forest is not

### Non-Timber Related Revenue Trend



captured in the chart because this activity does not generate any revenue. The prevalence of OHV use however, underscores the increasing demand on forest resources for recreational activity. Campsite fees collected by the concessionaires are also not captured here.

The management focus today is on what we leave versus what we remove.



## Analysis of Expenditures

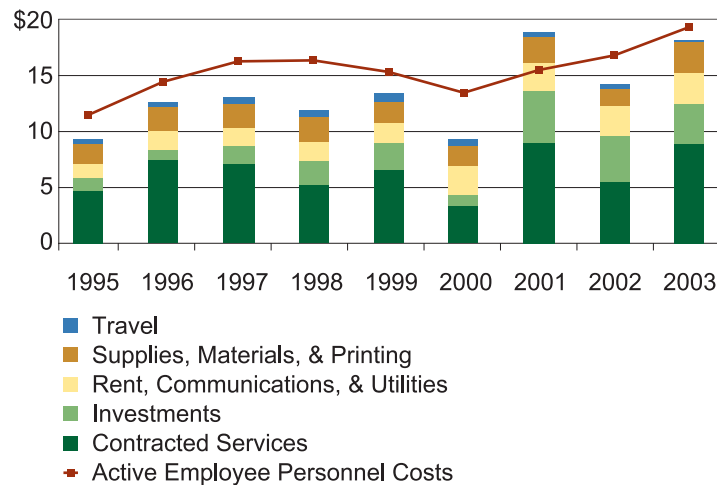
As the Lassen National Forest adapts to the changing needs of the land and community within funding parameters, a story is told through the corresponding shifts in spending.

### Personnel Costs as a Percentage of Total Costs:

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
57%	53%	56%	58%	54%	59%	45%	49%	50%

The Lassen has been able to maintain active personnel costs below 60 percent of total expenditures throughout the nine year trend. This allows the organization to stay flexible in times of fiscal contraction. Since FY 2001, the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Act earmarked funds have amplified the personnel base and Forest expenditures.

**Historical Expenditures — FY03**



Contracted services fluctuated downward in FY 2000 due to staff resources focusing time on the Environmental Impact Statement and implementation of HFQLG. This change in management direction resulted in a temporary shift towards planning to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Once planning was completed, implementation of HFQLG and other contracted services then increased costs again as shown in the bar for 2001.

Investments represent capital expenditures or non-recurring costs. Equipment and facility costs also rose in FY 2001 in order to reach the nationally mandated Most Efficient Level (MEL) standards set for the fire program. One such project was the construction of the Chester Air Tanker Base. With additional equipment and facility needs, supplies and contract services also increased. These costs represent both capital and non-capital purchases primarily of fire equipment, buildings, and building improvements.

The travel category primarily displays forest employees traveling for inter-forest and interagency meetings; training; and relocation costs. The forest staff embodies a variety of different disciplines from hydrologists to silviculturists. Maintaining expertise in these fields is crucial. Despite this emphasis, spending in this area is a controllable expense and has been declining as budgets tighten.

# Current Forest Operations

This Business Plan differentiates between two types of expenditures: those for operations and maintenance and those for investments. Operations and maintenance requirements are those funds needed to carry out everyday operations on the Forest. Some examples include annual payroll costs, rents and utilities and managing a telecommunications network. Investments are significant one-time costs of limited duration to fix current problems or add to the Forest's inventory of assets. This section of the business plan focuses on operations and maintenance activities of the forest and is displayed in the pie charts on the following page.

In order to describe the Forest's operations, activities were grouped into six functional areas that describe the areas of business for which the Forest is responsible. The six functional areas are shown in the graph on the right and described below. The six functional areas were further divided into 35 programs that more precisely describe forest operations. Programs are general in nature in order to cover a broad suite of activities that occur in the forest.

The business planning process required the completion of a "detail sheet" for each program area. The detail sheet, prepared by the program manager, describes the day-to-day activities, actual expenses, unfunded needs and necessary investments of the program.

The detail sheets included a statement of work that describes the suite of activities encompassed by each program. Operational standards were then generated to describe the duties and responsibilities required to meet the critical statement of work. These standards were then used to determine the total financial resources required to perform the standard tasks of the program. The final step compared current forest activities with the operations standards to identify the gaps between required and available resources.

The following pages describe each of the functional areas in detail.

**Resource Management** encompasses all activities related to the management, monitoring and protection of the Forest's natural and cultural resources including wildlife and vegetation management, watershed, air and geology, specially designated management areas, data management and land ownership and adjustment.

**Commodity & Commercial Uses** encompasses activities related to the production and management of a wide variety of commodities and commercial products. Programs include non-recreational special use management, grazing, minerals, and special forest products and timber.

**Public Use & Enjoyment** includes all activities directed at providing visitors with a safe, educational, and enjoyable experience in the forest including: visitor information, interpretation, recreation services, fee management, concessions management, visitor safety services, and recreational special uses.

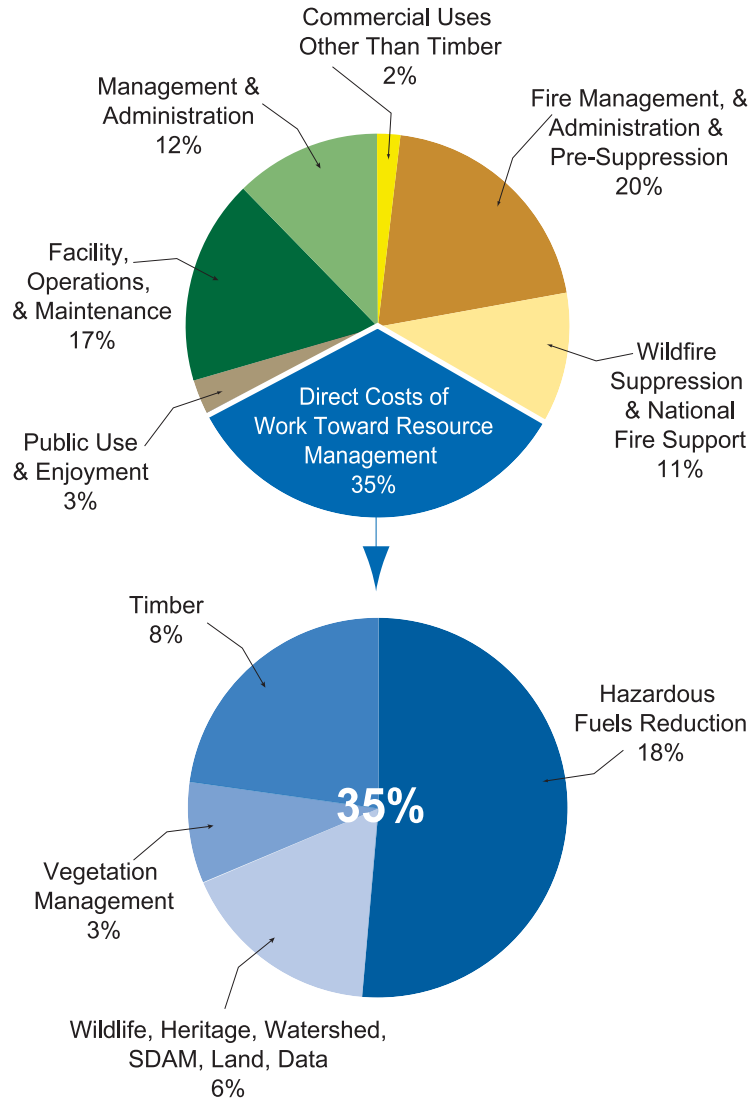
**Management & Administration** encompasses forest-wide management and administrative support activities including general and district administration, public affairs, planning, human resource management, information technology, leadership and financial management.

**Fire & Aviation Management** encompasses the Forest's fire organization activities and programs, which include administration, suppression and preparedness, hazardous fuels reduction, and national fire and emergency support.

**Facility Operations & Maintenance** includes activities required to manage and operate the Forest's infrastructure on a daily basis. Buildings, roads, trails, utilities, and campgrounds require a range of operational activities from basic sanitation to maintenance of forest assets.

## Operational Expenditures — FY03

Excluding Wildfire Suppression



## Current Forest Operations

BUSINESS PLAN INITIATIVE – Functional Areas & Programs

### Resource Management

- Wildlife
- Vegetation
- Watershed, air, & geologic resources
- Specially designated areas
- Heritage resources
- Data
- Land ownership & adjustment

### Commodity & Commercial Uses

- Timber
- Forest products
- Grazing
- Minerals
- Non-recreational special uses

### Public Use & Enjoyment

- Visitor safety & protection
- Recreation fee collection
- Concessions & recreational special uses
- Visitor centers, public information, interpretation, & education

### Management & Administration

- General management
- District management
- Forest planning
- Public affairs
- General administration
- Financial management
- Information technology

### Fire & Aviation Management

- Management & administration
- Fire pre-suppression & preparedness
- Hazardous fuels reduction
- Wildfire suppression
- National fire & disaster support

### Facilities, Operations, & Maintenance

- Campgrounds & developed sites
- Trails
- Concentrated use areas
- Buildings, grounds, & utilities
- Roads
- Transportation & fleet

## Resource Management

Resource Management is the backbone of the Lassen National Forest organization and encompasses activities related to monitoring, managing and protecting the Forest's natural, cultural and informational resources. The Lassen has identified "Aggressively Restoring and Maintaining Healthy and Sustainable Ecosystems" as one of their most critical missions. This emphasis will influence many resource management program areas. Importance is placed on reducing the spread of catastrophic wildfire and allowing fire to maintain its natural role in ecosystems; reducing the spread of noxious weeds; enhancing high quality fish and wildlife habitat; maintaining scenic landscapes; and enhancing forest watershed conditions to improve water quality and quantity. In FY 2003 this functional area was understaffed by 8 full time equivalent employees (FTEs), which most significantly impacted the areas of land management, heritage resources and data management.

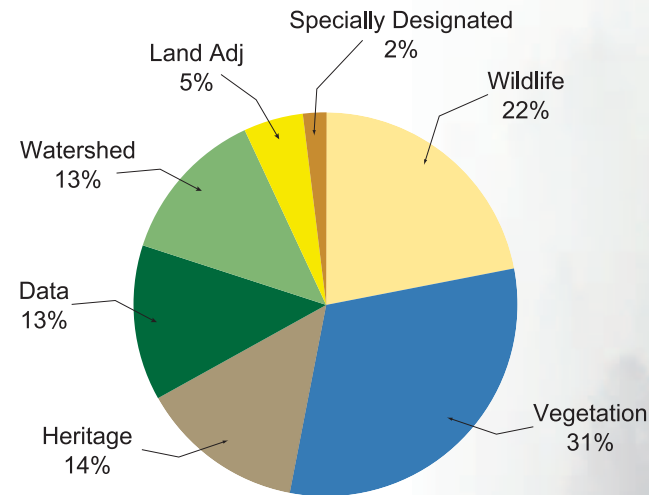
This program area is comprised of the following functional areas:

- Vegetation Management
- Watershed, Air and Geologic Resource Management
- Specially Designated Areas Management
- Heritage Resources Management
- Data Management
- Land Ownership and Adjustment
- Wildlife Management

### Vegetation Management:

The Vegetation Management Program focuses on plant diversity, forest health, diversifying the forest structure, improving habitat for wildlife and plants, and the prevention and eradication of invasive plant species. Also included in this area are reforestation and timber stand improvement efforts, restoration of riparian vegetation and data collection of the forest's natural character. This program area did not identify any unfunded personnel needs for FY 2003.

## Operational Expenditures FY03



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALLS	
FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS
41.4	\$3,602,999	33.2	\$3,203,292	8.2	\$399,708

### Watershed, Air & Geologic Resource Management:

This program includes activities related to the management of water quality, water supply, soil productivity, and air quality management. The object of the Lassen Watershed Program is to protect and improve water quality and quantity. Activities are designed to protect natural water infiltration, water retention, ground water recharge, and the transport of water through diverse ecosystems. The Soil Management Program is concerned with protecting soil properties so that they contribute to healthy watersheds and ecosystems.

The Watershed Program continues to be challenged by the uncertainties of an inconsistent funding composite. Because appropriated funding only makes up a minority of the program's needed dollars, staff levels have been kept at modest levels, which limits the overall performance. This trend has translated directly into a backlog of watershed restoration work.



Arrowleaf Balsamroot



View of Mill Creek on the Almanor Ranger District

### Specially Designated Areas Management:

Specially Designated Areas Management at the Lassen includes activities and operations related to the management of Wilderness Areas, Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and Special Interest Areas (SIAs). The Lassen is home to three designated wilderness areas, six candidate research natural areas, and seven special interest areas. This grouping of natural assets is managed to protect and restore the areas' natural ecological values and wilderness character; to promote an understanding of wilderness benefits; to provide primitive recreation opportunities; to provide examples of significant natural ecosystems for the purpose of ecological study; and to protect the habitat of rare and endangered species. In FY 2003, the wilderness program was meeting only a fraction of their operational standards and some important activities such as education efforts and recreation use impact surveys had been almost entirely abandoned as this program area did not receive adequate funding to staff field positions. Personnel placed in the field are crucial because they provide a point of contact for the public. They also provide a consistent source of data on field conditions. Over time, both of these shortcomings have the capacity to compromise the character of these special natural areas. At a minimum, a ranger who can spend 100 days a year in each wilderness area is needed. In FY 2003 this presence would have helped deter destructive activities within the wilderness such as unauthorized OHV and mountain bike use.

### Heritage Resource Management:

The Heritage Resource Program aims to protect significant heritage resources, share their value with the American people, and contribute relevant information and perspective to natural resource management. Program efforts are directed towards site stewardship, resource protection and public education. The program includes archeology, ethnography, historic structures analysis, cultural landscapes management, and American Indian tribal relations. It promotes heritage values through interpretation, presentation, and public outreach efforts. In FY 2003, the Heritage Program Manager identified a need for three additional FTEs. An archeologist's assistant is needed at both the

Hat Creek and Eagle Lake Districts and a program manager's assistant is needed at the Supervisor's Office. Additional staff would enable the program to dedicate more time towards grant-seeking and partnership activity. The presence of assistants would also allow the program manager to focus on strengthening the Contexts for Natural Resource Management and Research Program, which provides information about the forest's natural state through historic analysis. Increased reliance on context data has significant implication for species reintroduction as well as for fuels management. Finally, additional staff would enable the program area to transition from an inventory based effort to one based more on interpretation and public outreach.

### Data Management:

The Data Management program strives to enhance, support and enable the sharing of information and facilitate the decision-making processes for both the internal and external stakeholders of the forest. Data Management entails the storage, creation, conversion, analysis, maintenance and management of forest data, including physical, biologic, cultural, social and economic resource information.

In FY 2003, the Data Management Program was understaffed by two FTEs, which resulted in a program that was only able to meet basic administration needs. Additional personnel would enable the program to make strides forward in Geographic Information System data management activities. More staff would also enable the program manager to integrate individual project findings and data sets into a comprehensive context that would be applicable to the Forest as whole.

### Land Ownership & Adjustment:

The Land Ownership and Adjustment Program encompasses all Forest real estate management functions including clarification of forest boundaries and titles, land acquisitions, right-of-ways, easements, boundary management, and resolution of trespass. Currently, there are 71,000 acres of national forest land that lack public access. A backlog of right-of-way easements has contributed to this situation. In FY 2003, this program identified



Cascades Frog *Rana-cascade*, a sensitive species

a need for two FTEs to serve as case processors. Additional personnel are critical for the pursuit of land exchanges and clarification of right-of-ways. Land exchanges are a means of reducing the impacts of private land activity on public lands. Land adjustments also improve the management and administration of lands by consolidating ownership and access.

### Wildlife Management:

The primary focus of the Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plant (WFRP) Program is the management and protection of plant and animal habitats and species. Emphasis is placed on the management of federally listed threatened and endangered species, as well as Forest Service listed sensitive plants and animals. Management of species that are either federally listed or proposed for listing involves coordination and consultation with regulatory agencies. The WFRP program emphasizes protecting and restoring habitat with the objective of improving populations to meet recovery goals and to maintain species viability. Other activities include program administration, other resource program support, internal and external coordination and cooperation, habitat management and conservation, inventory and monitoring.

## Threatened, Endangered & Sensitive Species at the Lassen National Forest

Federally listed species in the Lassen National Forest include two terrestrial wildlife species, two aquatic species and two plant species. Of particular note are the bald eagle, the slender Orcutt grass and two species of anadromous fish. Anadromous fish spend part of their time in the ocean and their remaining time in freshwater creeks and rivers. The Lassen is unique in managing portions of five watersheds that provide the last stronghold of suitable habitat for two wild stocks of federally listed fish within the Central Valley of California: the spring-run Chinook salmon and the winter-run steelhead trout.

The Lassen also has 14 terrestrial species, 10 aquatic species and 27 plant species that are designated as Forest Service sensitive. The Lassen is the only forest that manages habitat for two sub-species of spotted owls, the northern spotted owl and the California spotted owl. Of particular importance to the Lassen is the protection and restoration of habitat for three sensitive species of amphibians currently showing drastic declines in parts of California: the Cascade frog, the mountain-yellow frog and the foothill yellow-legged frog. The Lassen also provides stream habitat essential for restoring a natural run of Eagle Lake trout, a sensitive species endemic to the Eagle Lake Basin.

While the Lassen is home to a large number of sensitive species, it also leads the region in the amount of timber volume produced, and has the second most extensive prescribed burn program in the region. These aspects contribute to the complexities of managing the land and continuing to provide habitat essential for many of these unique species. Development and implementation of conservation assessments and strategies in collaboration with federal, state and other interested stakeholders can be a tool for addressing these challenges and ultimately, protecting the rich and diverse flora and fauna important to the ecosystems.



Black Bear

## Commodity & Commercial Uses



Fresh snow on young sapling

Throughout the history of the national forests, management of national forest land has always been closely tied to the local, regional, and national economies. Connection with local communities is still a priority for the Lassen. The primary focus for commodity and commercial uses has shifted to supporting hazardous fuel reduction and implementing ecosystem management objectives. Today commodity and commercial uses are the tools and by-products for creating healthy forests; restoring ecosystems; and contributing to community stability. The five following program areas comprise this functional area:

- Timber
- Special Forest Products
- Grazing
- Minerals
- Non-recreational Special Uses

### Timber:

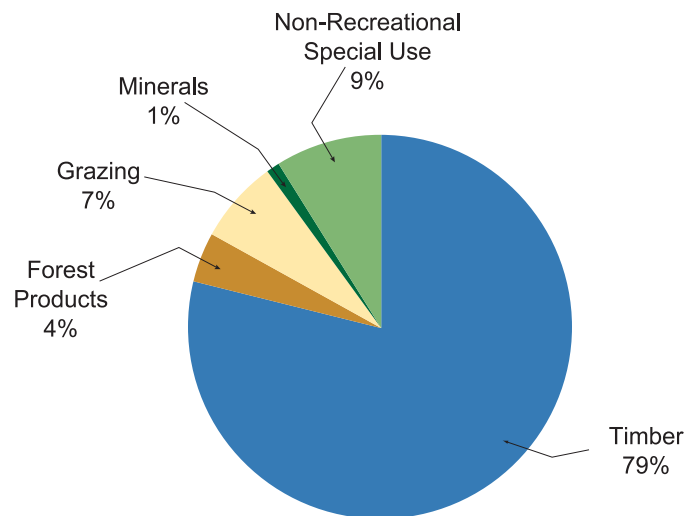
Timber extraction activities, which include both green trees and salvaged dead trees, restore natural fire resistant forests by reducing hazardous fuels and modifying forest structure. Although commercial timber sale revenues transferred to the national treasury have declined over the last decade, the Forest is still able to deposit a portion of the receipts into Trust Funds to fund a variety of projects.

Forest management is largely guided by the Sierra Nevada Framework, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act, and the National Fire Plan. Earmark funds and national strategy plans are tied to quantifiable goals and specific resource management standards. For example, timber extracted using HFQLG funds can only come from thirty inch diameter or smaller trees and is often



Marking trees for an upcoming timber sale

### Operational Expenditures FY03



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALLS	
FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS
51.3	\$3,937,137	49.3	\$3,846,929	2.0	\$90,208

sold as sawtimber to mills or biomass to co-generation energy plants. Although not all species of trees reach thirty inches in diameter, this management standard protects the older, large pine and fir trees found in the forest. The overall strategy involves protecting communities with an aggressive program of thinning and treatment of forest fuels. Revenue generated from commercial thinnings is used to help off-set the cost of fuels treatment.

### Special Forest Products:

All use and sale of forest vegetation products other than commercial timber operations are covered by the Special Forest Products Program. At the Lassen, the public can purchase permits

for firewood, Christmas trees, mushrooms, cones, and boughs. The Forest also issues permits for botanical tracking and collecting for educational or research purposes. Since the permit fees are not kept by the Forest (they are sent to the US Treasury) as is also the case in the timber program, the fees charged do not offset the cost for administering these programs. Because of this arrangement, there is an unfunded need at each of the ranger districts to help monitor compliance with permit use, especially during the winter season when holiday tree cutting is popular. The estimated cost of this unfunded need is \$27,172 to cover three people for two months of the year at each district.

### Grazing:

The management of rangelands is focused on maintaining healthy and properly functioning ecosystems within designated grazing areas. Compliance with the Clean Water Act is one of the many directives this program uses to monitor rangelands for sustainable ecosystems within and beyond national forest land. Currently, the Lassen has 25 permittees utilizing 44 allotments, which cover 693,137 acres. As a goal, this program is working cooperatively with permittees on many resource conservation and habitat restoration activities.

Additional grazing program costs include range monitoring, removing feral cattle and fencing. In FY 2003, this program had no unfunded needs, but is at risk with the anticipated 30 percent drop in Regional budget funding.

### Minerals:

Within this area, responsibilities primarily entail administration and monitoring the mineral materials program and gold mining claims on the Forest. Mineral materials, such as cinders and lava rock, are used for roadwork, winter road traction, and landscaping. The challenges to the program include unauthorized occupancy on a mining claim and reclaiming six abandoned mine sites. Reclaiming old mine shafts will require Forest specialists' time to analyze wildlife and environmental impacts from shaft closures along with



Measuring tree height while cruising timber on the Eagle Lake Ranger District

determining the most cost-effective method. The aggregated cost for the specialists' time to work on the six abandoned mines and the occupancy trespass is estimated at \$27,172.

### Non-recreational Special Uses:

The Lassen National Forest is home to more than just natural resources. It also houses the Hat Creek Radio Observatory, hydropower generation facilities, sanitary systems, rest areas, electric and telephone transmitting lines, and radio, television, and cell phone towers. Each of these special uses requires permitting, compliance monitoring, and environmental analysis. Currently, a large focus for this area is on the five year process for re-licensing the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hydropower projects. Since each license agreement has a fifty year life, this process is very time-intensive. Additional staffing, at an estimated cost of \$35,864, could resolve the backlog of expired or changed ownership permits, inspections and auditing of the special uses permit database.



## Public Use & Enjoyment



Hat Creek Interpretive Program



Old Station Visitors Center

The Public Use and Enjoyment functional area at the Lassen includes the following areas of responsibility:

- Law Enforcement and Investigations/Visitor Safety and Protection
- Recreation Fee Collection
- Concessions and Recreation Special Uses
- Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation and Education

The primary function of this area is to provide forest visitors with an enjoyable, educational and safe experience. The protection of forest assets and resources is also a priority of this program area. Employees enforce local and state laws, engage in fire prevention activities, administer recreation permits, provide visitor services and lead guided walks. This area of the Forest operations currently suffers the most from an inadequately staffed program, which diminishes the amount and quality of contact with Forest visitors. In FY 2003, ten FTEs were dedicated to this area while six additional FTEs were needed. The Public Use and Enjoyment area is negatively affected by having a large percentage of needs as compared to their current staffing level.

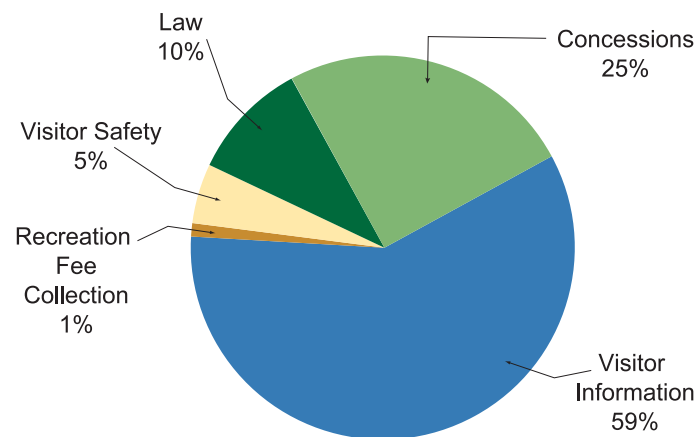
### Law Enforcement and Visitor Safety & Protection:

The Law Enforcement and Investigations (LEI) organization is an integral part of the overall management of the Forest and is primarily responsible for the prevention of crimes and for enforcement of federal laws and regulations on national forest and adjacent lands. The program is responsible for law enforcement efforts that include, as well as extend beyond the basic scope of visitor safety, such as illegal drug eradication and criminal investigations. Law Enforcement Officers detect and respond to crime, provide security for Agency personnel and facilities, and work closely with other Federal, State and Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies such as sheriff's departments, the State Fish and Game Department, and the California Highway Patrol. The LEI reported a need for one additional FTE to fill the position of Law Enforcement Officer. The population base within 50 miles of the Forest boundary has



Entrance to Subway Cave on the Hat Creek District

### Operational Expenditures FY03



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALLS	
FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS
21.5	\$1,572,433	15.5	\$1,254,875	6.0	\$317,559

increased by 20 percent in the last ten years and this exerts a strain on the current law enforcement organization. An additional officer would allow the forest to focus on enforcement efforts, specifically in the area of illegal drugs.

The Visitor Safety Program at the Lassen is comprised of one employee who acts as the Sierra Cascade Province Occupational Safety and Health Manager with responsibility to establish and maintain a comprehensive and continuing safety and health program throughout the Sierra Cascade Province. The program includes accident prevention and risk management, safety education, accident analysis and reporting, fire prevention and protection of facilities, and a variety of other occupational safety and health related programs. This program is utilized for the protection, health and safety of employees, contractors and private individuals and the prevention of damage to such property such as structures, materials and equipment. This program area did not identify any unfunded personnel needs in FY 2003.

#### Recreation Fee Collection:

The Lassen National Forest recreation fee collection program is responsible for managing the McCarthy Point Lookout. The McCarthy Point Lookout is a historic fire lookout that has been converted into a recreation residence that may be rented for \$40.00/weeknight and \$60.00/weekend night. This program is currently adequately staffed.

#### Concessions & Recreation Special Uses:

This program administers recreation special uses, including 399 recreation residences, boat-marinas, resorts, target ranges, recreation events, outfitter guide services, one ski area, five organization camps, and the Forest's concession program. In FY 2003, this program area needed two additional FTEs. Vacancies in the Lands/Special Uses Officer position at the Hat Creek District and in the Recreation Officer position at the Eagle Lake Ranger District impeded this program's ability to meet their operational standards. Response times to permit holder inquiries and to new application requests suffered the most. Addressing these personnel needs would enable the program to run more efficiently and be more user-friendly. Additional help would also



A crisp autumn day at Crater Lake on the Eagle Lake Ranger District

address the growing backlog of expired special-use permits and permits that need to be inspected to protect public lands.

#### Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation & Education:

This program area relates to contacts between Lassen National Forest personnel and the visiting public at visitor centers, information desks, by telephone and via the Internet. Specific responsibilities include providing information to visitors who are planning day hikes, backcountry or extended camping trips, management and staffing of visitor centers; and conducting interpretive activities such as guided walks, presentations and campfire programs. In FY 2003, there was only one interpretive position for the entire Forest. Due to lack of funding, the Forest interpreter position has not been filled, impeding the Lassen's ability to build an effective interpretation and conservation education program. It is recommended that each district hire a temporary employee to accomplish summer interpretation and education activities at campgrounds and day use sites. These additional positions would allow the program area to greatly expand public outreach, community partnerships, and grant writing efforts, which are integral to maintaining the integrity of the program's intent.

## Management & Administration

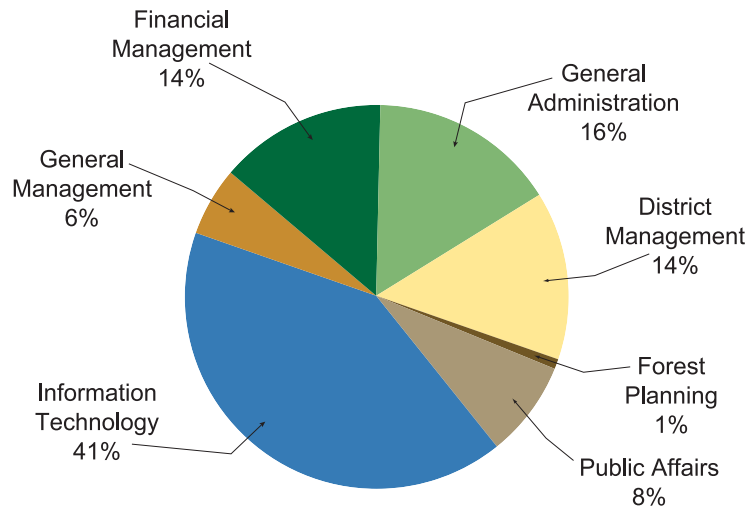


Melissa Hennessey, Fire Prevention Technician

Management and administration directs the overall organization, protection, and development of the Forest's resources. Seven essential program roles fulfill this responsibility.

- General Management
- District Management
- Forest Planning
- Public Affairs
- General Administration
- Financial Management
- Information Technology

### Operational Expenditures FY03



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALLS	
FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS
54.6	\$4,654,920	51.0	\$4,394,949	3.6	\$259,971

### General Management:

The Forest Supervisor along with the help of an administrative analyst provides leadership and oversight of staff operations and coordination with managers from the various program areas. Short and long range strategic objectives along with high-level interactions with other agencies, tribal groups, corporate, nonprofit, and public institutions are accomplished by the general management.

### District Management:

Almanor, Eagle Lake, and Hat Creek make up the three ranger districts at Lassen National Forest. A district ranger leads each district office with the assistance of a support staff. District management provides guidance to implement direction outlined in the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as it applies to each Forest resource area including timber, soil, land, water, wildlife and fish habitat, minerals, forage, wilderness and visual areas, and outdoor recreation. Along with the public affairs team, the district staff is the public's gateway to the forest. A posing obstacle for the district management has been the lack of adequate facilities, including office space, barracks for temporary employees, and warehouse complexes. The district rangers have developed prioritized cost estimates for these needs, but have not yet gained funding.

### Forest Planning:

This program incorporates all planning at the forest scale, including development and maintenance of land and resource management plans. The program also works closely with the data management program area, through the inventory and monitoring of forest resources. Among the various planning documents required are resource assessments, forest plan amendments, project environmental analyses, appeals, objections, and litigation. The Forest Planning Program also includes the preparation of annual monitoring reports as well as managing the NEPA and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) programs. The land and resource management plan outlines goals for the next fifty years, but revisions occur every 10-15 years. The first revision is scheduled to begin in 2007.

When balancing the multitude of forest resources, strategic forest planning is most critical. With over two unfunded FTEs, forest planning has the greatest funding shortfall causing their operational standards to be reactive to day to day environmental coordination needs rather than the more strategic activities required by the program. In order to meet the forest plan needs, funding of approximately \$191,421 for a land and resource management planner, an environmental coordinator, and part-time forester is pertinent to developing and implementing the Forest's strategic efforts.

### Public Affairs:

On any given day, the public affairs team may be required to facilitate a Resource Advisory Committee meeting, nurture ongoing relationships with the local community, or host a public forum. In addition to a Public Affairs Officer and support staff, the Lassen maintains a Tribal Relations Program Manager along with specific information staff located at the main desk of the Supervisor's Office and the District Ranger Offices. During fire season and times of Forest policy changes, this is the public's first access to information. Managing an external website for Lassen National Forest is one of the goals for this program.

### General Administration:

General administration within the forest covers human resources, civil rights, and liaisons with the provincial human resource and safety operational teams. The Human Resource Specialist provides support to both managers and staff on a variety personnel issues from employee benefits to policy training. The Civil Rights Officer ensures that all Forest programs are aligned with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies, and promotes equal access for the public to Forest Service programs and activities. Advise, counsel, recruitment and compliance are the main goals for this support area.

### Financial Management:

In an environment of mandated funding and budget constraints, dynamic financial advice is crucial for the Lassen to efficiently allocate resources. Both Forest staff and members of the provincial



Measuring snow for water content at Silver Lake on the Almanor Ranger District

financial services operation work to meet that goal. The primary responsibilities are expenditure monitoring and reporting to ensure program objectives are met. The unfunded needs are in the province financial operations team and the portion allocated to Lassen is slightly over one FTE costing \$68,550.

### Information Technology:

This program covers all telecommunications, radios, network, phones, dispatch and alarm systems used by the forest, except for fire dispatch and other fire-related information technology activities. The seven FTEs support the Lassen's business needs by addressing the security and privacy of the communications systems plus informing, supporting, and training employees on the ever-changing technology available. This is one of the Forest Service areas currently under review for competitive sourcing. The non-capital equipment expenditures (computers/software, field data recorders (FDR), laser dendrometers) account for this program area's large size compared to the other programs within the Management and Administrative functional area.

## Fire & Aviation Management



Each year fire employees get together to discuss safety & important items for the upcoming wildfire season. On that day employees have training exercises for hose lays, & water drafting.



Helicopter using a helitorch on the Stonehenge prescribed burn. Helitorch is used for large prescription burns to increase forage for wildlife & protect resources from catastrophic fires.

The fire management organization is responsible for the protection of natural resources, forest assets and human lives. The scope of this program's work is expansive. It includes duties from educating local communities about fire prevention to assisting with national disaster relief efforts including the severe southern California forest fires in the summer of 2003 and the Columbia space shuttle disaster in 2001.

Since the passage of the National Fire Plan and the Sierra Nevada Framework (2004 amendment), the Lassen fire organization has been charged with meeting ambitious targets for acres of fuels treated as set by Congress. Some years these aggressive targets are accompanied by increased funding, and other years they are not. Because of the strain on the organization to meet national standards, this program area has identified the largest need for additional personnel. In Fiscal year 2003, the Fire and Aviation Management program was short 11 FTEs. A Forest Fuels Officer, a Fire Protection Officer and three Fire Prevention Technicians are among their needs. Five areas of responsibility are highlighted below:

- Management and Administration
- Fire Pre-Suppression and Preparedness
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction
- Wildfire Suppression
- National Fire Support

### Management & Administration:

The Management and Administration program area includes the management, supervision and oversight of all fire management operations including budgeting and planning, general supervision, and the formulation and monitoring of safety plans. The management and administration program also includes responsibilities within the Susanville Interagency Fire Center (SIFC) organization, which functions as a local emergency coordination center. In FY 2003, this program area lacked one FTE for the position of SIFC Forest Service Manager.

### Fire Pre-Suppression & Preparedness:

This program area includes all activities related to preventing and preparing for wildfires. The prevention aspects of the program

focus on education, engineering and enforcement. Education is delivered through Smokey the Bear programs conducted in local schools. Engineering includes the abatement of fire hazards along roadways and in high use areas by removing flammable vegetation. Enforcement includes executing state fire law. The preparedness component of the program focuses on the firefighter training and qualifications program. This program is also responsible for the maintenance of an emergency communications system and an Interagency Emergency Communications Center.

### Hazardous Fuels Reduction:

This program area involves an integrated approach to reduce the risk of wildfire by restoring natural ecological conditions and scenic landscape character. Activities include removal of encroaching conifers from hardwood stands, prescribed burning, brush removal, and thinning smaller diameter trees. Hazardous fuels reduction relates directly to the need to provide for community protection and to restore healthy forests, the two major emphases in the National Fire Plan.

### Wildfire Suppression:

Wildfire suppression activities are concerned with fighting wildfires within the home forest boundaries. Fires may be fought on the ground with engines, hand crews, and machinery and from the air with helicopters and tankers. Larger fires may require the set-up and operation of an incident base to provide for food, lodging and supply needs of firefighters.

### National Fire Support:

All off-forest emergency assignments, during which Lassen employees help other jurisdictions throughout the United States and abroad, are included within the National Fire Support program. The majority of these assignments relate to fighting large forest fires within the United States. Fire Teams are made up of home forest employees who travel to other locations to help with the management and suppression of a wild land fire. Responsibilities are diverse and complex and can include fire financial management, heritage site reclamation and actual on the ground, fire-fighting.

## Facilities, Operations, & Maintenance

The facilities and infrastructure of the Lassen are vital to fulfilling the public and resource demands on the land. This functional area has been categorized by the six following programs.

- Campgrounds and Developed Sites
- Trails
- Concentrated Use Areas
- Buildings, Grounds, and Utilities
- Roads
- Transportation and Fleet

### Campgrounds & Developed Sites:

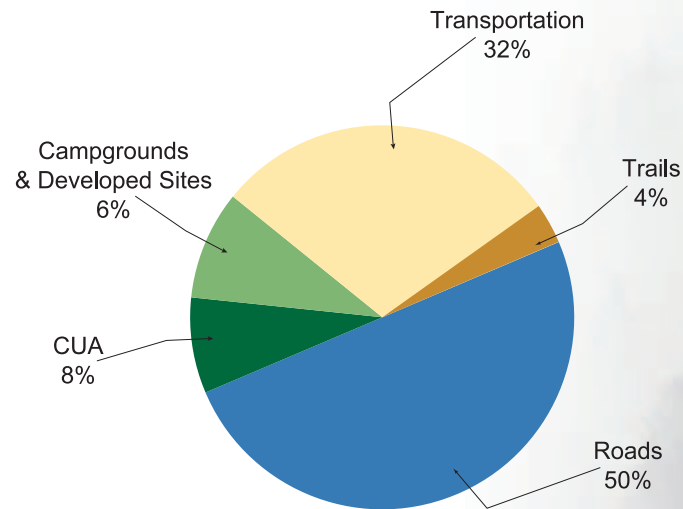
Recreational use of public lands is a growing trend. The Lassen has felt this demand and is struggling to maintain its recreational complexes. Without adequate, proactive maintenance and monitoring, the Forest falls prey to overuse and adverse environmental impacts. The budget has not met the increasing maintenance needs at 117 developed sites, which range from large recreational complexes to remote trailheads and picnic areas. An additional two FTEs in the position of a landscape architect and an engineer will improve the Forest's ability to respond to visitor needs by maintaining and enhancing facility conditions. The estimated unfunded need is \$131,512.

### Trails & Concentrated Use Areas:

There are 819 miles of trails on the Lassen, including nationally and historically recognized routes. The trail program managers provide trail signage, and maintenance, closure of social trails, and removal of hazardous trees and rock fall. Upkeep of the trail system ensures prolonged trail life and protection from erosion, sedimentation, and off-site trampling along with other environmental or wildlife impacts. Hikers on both the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and the Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail have the opportunity to enjoy some of the most scenic areas on the Lassen.

Over-snow-vehicle (OSV) and off-highway-vehicle use is among the growing recreational demands on the Lassen. The impact

### Operational Expenditures FY03



REQUIRED		AVAILABLE		SHORTFALLS	
FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS	FTE	FUNDS
63.6	\$7,452,755	45.6	\$6,368,971	18	\$1,083,784

from OHVs extends from the designated road and trail system into the concentrated use areas, which are heavily visited but not developed sites. Management has tried to proactively mitigate the impact from OSVs and OHVs by designating and constructing staging areas and by educating users. As a way to meet this challenge, the Forest has enlisted the volunteer help of many local OSV and OHV clubs.

Adding a GIS specialist along with the part-time support of an engineer will enable the completion of the trail system inventory and improve the efficiency of the trail maintenance program at a cost of approximately \$87,222. The concentrated use program will require the funding of a permanent GIS specialist to assist with inventory tracking and three seasonal staff to mitigate the environment impacts to these areas, which would cost \$149,822.



Employees using a snowcat to prepare trails for snowmobiling and cross country skiing



Visitors enjoy camping at Cave Campground on the Hat Creek Ranger District

### Buildings, Grounds, Utilities, Roads, & Fleet:

The Lassen National Forest encompasses extensive infrastructure, equipment and numerous facilities, all of which require constant maintenance. The goal is to provide a safe and pleasant experience for visitors as well as prevent detrimental effects to the natural resources at a cost-effective price.

While the fleet maintenance program is currently in transition to a private service provider, the buildings, grounds, utilities and roads programs are struggling with a large backlog of deferred maintenance and new construction projects. Strategies to meet these demands are outlined in both the Business Plan Strategic Objectives and Investment Priorities sections.

In order for the buildings and grounds program to meet their operational standards, three additional civil engineers are needed. To resolve the deferred maintenance backlog, one engineer is needed for design and contract services administration. To address the transportation system backlog of deferred maintenance, four civil engineers will be needed to manage road improvements and two civil engineers working as contract administrators with emphasis on maintenance. Also two civil engineers will serve as transportation planners. These twelve unfunded positions would cost \$715,228.



Four wheeling on a maintenance level 2 road on the Almanor Ranger in Humbug Valley

Photo Courtesy of Dick Taitman



Eagle Lake Ranger District Office

# Financial & Investments

## Summary Financial Statement 2003

The following section of the business plan outlines the program operational expenditures and the program personnel shortfalls categorized by the fund source. This financial statement does not include investment expenditures or shortfalls, since these needs are captured in the Business Plan Investment Priorities Section.

In the Table: Summary Financial and Investments Statement 2003 on the next page, the “Required” Funds Column is based on the total funds needed to meet the Forest Service Program Managers’ operational standards. By examining the current work level compared to a set of standards, often mandated requirements, the program managers along with the Business Plan Initiative consultants determined the funding and personnel needed to bridge this gap. In other words, it is a snapshot of the resource shortfalls in FY 2003. The cost of the personnel shortfall is calculated based on the 2003 GS pay scale plus an additional 35 percent for estimated benefits unless a temporary employee was needed, in which case, only 32 percent was added.

As shown in the table, the 48.7 unfunded FTEs is roughly sixteen percent of the current work force. Although the Resource Management Functional Area holds the greatest FTE unfunded needs, the Public Use and Enjoyment Area is affected by having the largest percentage of needs as compared to their current staffing level.



Each winter, the Almanor Ranger District provides interpretive talks and snowshoe walks to schools and interested publics to enhance their awareness of the forest in winter



Measuring tree height with a relaskop

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The Public Use & Enjoyment Area is affected by having the largest percentage of needs as compared to their current staffing level.



Summary Financial Statement 2003	REQUIRED		AVAILABLE								SURPLUS/(SHORTFALL)		
	FTE	Funds	Appropriated - base	Appropriated - construction	Appropriated - QLG	Appropriated - other earmarks	Revenue Drawback	Reimbursable	FTE	Funds	FTE	Funds	
<b>FUNCTIONAL AREAS AND PROGRAMS</b>													
<b>RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b>													
Wildlife Management	7.8	\$ 664,918	\$ 600,781	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 28,615	\$ 35,522	7.8	\$664,918	0.0	\$0
Vegetation Management	5.5	\$ 987,702	\$ 743,662	\$ -	\$ 135,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 109,040	5.5	\$987,702	0.0	\$0
Heritage Resources	11.0	\$ 578,148	\$ 420,537	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,330	8.0	\$444,867	(3.0)	(\$133,281)
Data Management	8.0	\$ 541,251	\$ 235,319	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 197,243	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	6.0	\$432,562	(2.0)	(\$108,689)
Watershed, Air & Geologic Management	2.9	\$ 437,101	\$ 32,712	\$ -	\$ 93,707	\$ 4,999	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 305,683	2.9	\$437,101	0.0	\$0
Land Ownership & Adjustment	4.2	\$ 297,001	\$ 174,667	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	2.2	\$174,667	(2.0)	(\$122,334)
Specially Designated Areas Management	2.0	\$ 96,879	\$ 61,475	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.8	\$61,475	(1.2)	(\$35,404)
Subtotal	41.4	\$ 3,602,999	\$ 2,269,152	\$ -	\$ 228,707	\$ 202,242	\$ -	\$ 28,615	\$ 474,575	33.2	\$3,203,292	(8.2)	(\$399,708)
<b>PUBLIC USE &amp; ENJOYMENT</b>													
Law Enforcement	10.8	\$ 713,809	\$ 632,734	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,316	9.8	\$657,050	(1.0)	(\$56,759)
Visitor Safety & Protection	1.0	\$ 33,099	\$ 33,099	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	1.0	\$33,099	0.0	\$0
Visitor Centers, Public Information, Interpretation & Education	6.4	\$ 606,131	\$ 399,676	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	2.4	\$399,676	(4.0)	(\$206,456)
Concessions & Recreation Special Uses	3.2	\$ 212,232	\$ 151,424	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,464	2.2	\$157,888	(1.0)	(\$54,344)
Recreation Fee Collection	0.2	\$ 7,162	\$ 7,162	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.2	\$7,162	0.0	\$0
Subtotal	21.5	\$ 1,572,433	\$ 1,224,095	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,780	15.5	\$1,254,875	(6.0)	(\$317,559)
<b>FACILITY OPERATIONS &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>													
Campgrounds & Developed Sites	7.0	\$ 522,942	\$ 321,777	\$ 31,914	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37,740	5.0	\$391,430	(2.0)	(\$131,512)
Trails	3.8	\$ 284,631	\$ 114,314	\$ 39,537	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43,558	2.3	\$197,409	(1.5)	(\$87,222)
Concentrated Use Areas	6.4	\$ 527,438	\$ 151,424	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 226,192	3.9	\$377,616	(2.5)	(\$149,822)
Buildings, Grounds & Utilities	8.9	\$ 1,896,740	\$ 1,658,331	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	4.9	\$1,658,331	(4.0)	(\$238,409)
Roads	25.5	\$ 2,768,235	\$ 809,039	\$ 837,746	\$ 282,824	\$ -	\$ 253,483	\$ 108,324	\$ 17,945	17.5	\$2,291,416	(8.0)	(\$476,819)
Transportation & Fleet	12.0	\$ 1,452,768	\$ 1,451,669	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,099	12.0	\$1,452,768	0.0	\$0
Subtotal	63.6	\$ 7,452,755	\$ 4,506,554	\$ 909,196	\$ 282,824	\$ -	\$ 253,483	\$ 416,913	\$ 45,613	45.6	\$6,368,971	(18.0)	(\$1,083,784)
<b>MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION</b>													
General Management	5.9	\$ 249,040	\$ 249,040	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	5.9	\$249,040	0.0	\$0
Financial Management	13.3	\$ 689,281	\$ 601,289	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19,442	12.2	\$620,731	(1.1)	(\$68,550)
General Administration	11.7	\$ 684,950	\$ 684,950	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	11.7	\$684,950	0.0	\$0
District Management	7.5	\$ 616,644	\$ 616,644	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	7.5	\$616,644	0.0	\$0
Planning	3.3	\$ 252,926	\$ 61,505	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.8	\$61,505	(2.5)	(\$191,421)
Public Affairs	5.9	\$ 331,846	\$ 331,846	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	5.9	\$331,846	0.0	\$0
Information Technology	7.0	\$ 1,830,233	\$ 1,830,233	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	7.0	\$1,830,233	0.0	\$0
Subtotal	54.6	\$ 4,654,920	\$ 4,375,507	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19,442	51.0	\$4,394,949	(3.6)	(\$259,971)
<b>COMMODITY &amp; COMMERCIAL USES</b>													
Timber	40.6	\$ 2,961,276	\$ 885,402	\$ -	\$ 920,925	\$ -	\$ 1,127,454	\$ 27,496	\$ -	40.6	\$2,961,276	0.0	\$0
Forest Products	2.4	\$ 167,987	\$ 140,815	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	1.9	\$140,815	(0.5)	(\$27,172)
Grazing	3.3	\$ 325,062	\$ 298,958	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26,104	\$ -	3.3	\$325,062	0.0	\$0
Minerals	1.2	\$ 73,491	\$ 46,319	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.7	\$46,319	(0.5)	(\$27,172)
Non-recreation Special Uses	3.8	\$ 409,320	\$ 345,816	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,945	\$ 9,695	\$ -	2.8	\$373,456	(1.0)	(\$35,864)
Subtotal	51.3	\$ 3,937,137	\$ 1,717,310	\$ -	\$ 920,925	\$ -	\$ 1,145,399	\$ 63,295	\$ -	49.3	\$3,846,929	(2.0)	(\$90,208)
<b>FIRE &amp; AVIATION MANAGEMENT</b>													
Management & Administration	8.6	\$ 995,685	\$ 896,914	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	6.6	\$896,914	(2.0)	(\$98,771)
Fire Pre-Suppression & Preparedness	102.0	\$ 6,371,698	\$ 5,940,817	\$ 187,370	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,995	\$ 34,168	\$ -	98.0	\$6,198,350	(4.0)	(\$173,348)
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	76.0	\$ 6,613,587	\$ 1,297,076	\$ -	\$ 4,738,713	\$ 8,483	\$ 160,118	\$ 271,713	\$ -	73.0	\$6,476,103	(3.0)	(\$137,484)
Subtotal without Wildfire and National Support	186.6	\$ 13,980,970	\$ 8,134,807	\$ 187,370	\$ 4,738,713	\$ 8,483	\$ 196,113	\$ 305,881	\$ -	177.6	\$13,571,368	(9.0)	(\$409,602)
Wildfire Suppression	26.0	\$ 3,193,919	\$ 3,122,191	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	24.0	\$3,122,191	(2.0)	(\$71,728)
National Fire & Disaster Support	11.0	\$ 943,855	\$ 943,855	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	11.0	\$943,855	0.0	\$0
Subtotal	223.6	\$ 18,118,744	\$ 12,200,852	\$ 187,370	\$ 4,738,713	\$ 8,483	\$ 196,113	\$ 305,881	\$ -	212.6	\$17,637,413	(11.0)	(\$481,331)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>455.9</b>	<b>\$39,338,988</b>	<b>\$26,293,471</b>	<b>\$1,096,567</b>	<b>\$6,171,169</b>	<b>\$210,725</b>	<b>\$1,623,610</b>	<b>\$1,310,886</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>407.2</b>	<b>\$36,706,428</b>	<b>(48.7)</b>	<b>(\$2,632,560)</b>

## Investment Priorities

Determining the highest priority investments is a monumental task, especially in light of limited funding resources. The Lassen National Forest considered which projects would contribute the highest value towards a healthy and sustainable forest for the future. The criteria considered included capitalizing on internal and external synergies, negative impacts of ignored investments, the return on investment (even if not financially quantifiable), and the contribution to the overall forest mission. All investments identified are ones for which there is currently no funding source available. A vast number of the forest's investment needs involve addressing the backlog of deferred infrastructure maintenance and new facilities. This work will be balanced with the Forests Strategic Objectives.

### Aquatic & Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat Improvements

Diminished quality and quantity of key aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitats is a continued concern for the forest. The Lassen National Forest will be focusing efforts towards capitalizing on partnership synergies to meet this investment need. Numerous ongoing efforts are identified in the Biological Resources Program Plan (1993). Several of those efforts have increased emphasis for completion within the next five years including:

Aquatic and Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat Improvements. Total estimated cost \$1,950,000.

Implementation of the Pine Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Estimated cost \$100,000.

Development and implementation of the interagency Eagle Lake Trout Conservation Plan for the Eagle Lake Basin. Estimated cost \$100,000.

Lower Westside Forest Hardwood Ecosystem Enhancement. Estimated cost \$250,000

Forestwide Aspen and Cottonwood Ecosystem Enhancement. Estimated cost \$500,000.

Northside Shrubland and Grassland Ecosystem Enhancement. Estimated cost \$1,000,000.



Raining at Domingo Springs on the Almanor Ranger District

### Land Adjustments

Land adjustments aim to consolidate land ownership for the benefit of resource management, resource value and public access. Currently, there are parcels of land adjacent to or contained within the forest that are privately owned. This disruption in boundaries impedes land management as well as certain project work. Exchanging isolated tracts of Forest Service owned land, which is less integral to the Forest's mission, is the ultimate goal of land exchanges to consolidate national forest ownership.

Land Adjustments with private owners, total estimated cost \$800,000.

Collins Pine III land adjustment consolidates ownership in the Mill Creek watershed area. Estimated cost \$300,000.

Sierra Pacific land adjustment consolidates ownership. Estimated cost \$500,000.



Aspen tree in the fall

### Deferred Maintenance & New Facilities

Lassen National Forest currently struggles to provide adequate employee office space. This impacts employee retention and recruitment. During fire season, facilities needs are especially dire. Currently, management rents office and barracks space for fire crews, which has resulted in the diversion of funds away from other needed program expenses. An investment in permanent, Forest-Service owned facilities would add to the short and long term value of the fire program.

In recent years, the forest has only been able to accomplish a minimum of deferred maintenance facility needs. This work is usually limited to correcting more urgent health and safety items. The total backlog of deferred maintenance needs for administrative and recreation buildings and water/wastewater systems is approximately \$8,000,000. The following list shows the Lassen's top three deferred maintenance and capital improvement priorities in each category:

#### Fire Facilities, total estimated cost \$2,500,000

New barracks and office space for the fire crew stationed at Spalding. Estimated cost \$1,500,000.

Construction of a new building includes office space, engine bay, garage and storage at the Almanor Ranger District. Estimated cost \$800,000.

Remodeling of the existing office building and upgrade of existing utilities at the Hat Creek Work Center. Estimated cost \$200,000.

#### Administrative Facilities, total estimated cost \$9,854,200

Replacement of current office, warehouse complex, and barracks complex at the Almanor Ranger District. Estimated cost \$6,737,000.

Construction of a new office to replace 2 leased modular buildings at the Hat Creek Ranger District. Estimated cost \$2,800,000.

New construction and deferred maintenance of existing facilities, and upgraded utilities at the Mineral Work Center. Estimated cost \$317,200.

#### Recreational Facilities, total estimated cost \$16,500,000

Merrill Campground – Phase III and IV deferred maintenance. Estimated cost \$1,500,000.

Almanor Recreation Area deferred maintenance and new construction. Estimated cost \$12,000,000 – this figure includes a 40 percent match available from Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E).

Hat Creek Recreation Area deferred maintenance. Estimated cost \$3,000,000.

#### Recreational Trail Systems, total estimated cost \$3,100,000

Trail system deferred maintenance. Estimated cost \$120,000 per year for the next five years.

Trail system capital improvements. Estimated cost \$500,000 over five years.

#### Transportation system deferred maintenance, total estimated cost \$4,500,000.

Road funds for pre-construction and construction engineering have been historically based on the green timber volume produced by Lassen National Forest at a national average rate of \$20/MBF (thousand board feet). Although Lassen currently produces an estimated volume of 90 MMBF as of FY 2004, the current allocation for road maintenance and improvements has declined by approximately 48 percent from this past allocation formula. The result has been a \$40 million backlog of deferred maintenance costs. As a means of resolving this problem, the following projects have been highlighted as the top three priorities in addition to implementing the travel and access plan as described in the forest strategies section.

Administrative Site Paving. Estimated cost \$1,000,000.

Forest Road 18 Reconstruction (23 miles). Estimated cost \$2,500,000.

Forest Road 21 Reconstruction (14.1 miles). Estimated cost \$1,000,000.

# Forest Strategic Objectives

## Lassen National Forest Strategic Objective 1: Aggressively Restore & Maintain Healthy & Sustainable Ecosystems.

The mission of the Forest Service is based upon the relationship between the American people and the rich natural heritage provided by the national forests. This relationship is founded on the principles of sustaining our natural resources for future generations, providing outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, improving watershed and ecosystem health, and providing economic benefits for communities and businesses.

The Lassen National Forest has an aggressive vegetation management program to restore healthy ecosystems within the range of natural variability. A key objective is to allow fire to play a more natural role in the ecosystem. Wildfires do not know borders and are just as devastating across private lands. The Lassen recognizes the need to create community defense zones and reduce hazardous fuels on both national forest and private lands. Cooperative land use planning between federal, state, and county agencies will better protect natural resource values across all jurisdictions. Current and future fuel treatments are focused in the urban/wildland interface to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire near communities. The establishment and maintenance of defensible fuel profile zones are also a priority. Proposed treatments are designed for multiple benefits such as enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, improvement of watershed conditions, and creation of scenic vistas. Balancing recreational use consistent with maintaining healthy ecosystems is a critical part of this strategy. Recreation activities must be compatible with sound stewardship of forest resources.

### Challenges:

- Maintaining sustainable ecosystems is a complex task. Large areas of the Forest need to be thinned to restore healthy ecosystems. Steady progress is impeded by changing political direction, project appeals, and other external influences.
- Resource budgets are not stable from year to year, which hinder predictable and measurable program accomplishments.

- Noxious species will continue to expand across the Forest without aggressive eradication. It is identified as one of the Forest's most serious threats and an unfunded need.
- It is not likely that funding from all sources will allow quick, large scale enhancement of riparian ecosystems although the need is great.
- As recreational use grows, unacceptable resource impacts are more evident, especially from unregulated off-highway vehicle use and dispersed camping. The identified unfunded needs in the trails and concentrated uses areas are a result of these challenges.

### Means & Actions:

- Over the next five years, the HFQLG pilot program will be fully implemented. The Lassen receives substantial funding for hazardous fuels reduction under the pilot program. Approximately 30,000 acres will be treated in FY 2004. Many of the planned acres are in defensible fuel profile zones, which run along roads and slow the spread of an advancing wildfire.
- Fire hazards do not stop at the national forest boundary. The Lassen will continue to collaborate with numerous local fire safe councils, private landowners and other partners to implement fuel reduction treatments on private lands. When available, Forest Service grant funds are distributed according to the greatest good for all partners.
- The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Payments to States) Program is an additional funding source to accomplish a variety of ecosystem projects on both national forest and adjacent private lands where there is a public land benefit. Under this program, the Lassen expects to implement a minimum of ten watershed restoration projects over the next two years. Specific projects include: road reconstruction, eradication of invasive species, fuel reduction, and reconstruction of recreation and trail facilities.



Hikers near Black Rock hiking into Ishi Wilderness on the Almanor Ranger District



First snow of the winter

- Prevention, suppression, and restoration tactics will reduce the impacts from invasive species and restore ecosystems. The Lassen plans to treat from 100 to 200 acres of noxious weed species per year through 2010. A forest-wide Noxious Weed Prevention and Treatment Plan would be developed from environmental analysis planned for completion in FY 2005. Primary focus will be on three high priority weed infestation areas, Ladder Butte Cinder Pit, Brush Mountain and Murken Bench in Shasta County. An integrated weed management approach will be used in which various treatments are applied in combination to achieve the most effective results.
- In order to control the impacts from motorized recreation, the Lassen will be transitioning from an open forest to a policy that restricts OHV travel to designated routes and areas. This policy is consistent with Forest Plan and national OHV direction. The goal is to develop an Access and Travel Management Plan within the next four fiscal years through a collaborative public planning process.

### Lassen National Forest Strategic Objective 2: Improve Operational Efficiencies.

Americans cherish the national forests for the values they provide – clean water, clean air, natural scenic beauty, spiritual renewal, majestic forests, wilderness, a connection with their history, and opportunities for unparalleled outdoor adventure. Recreation visitors want a great deal from the forests in terms of settings, experiences, facilities, and services. Recreation is the fastest growing use on the national forests. It is one of the most visible programs at the Lassen and a significant revenue/tax generator for local communities and businesses. Recreation is the means to connect people to nature, allowing them to have an experience that is fundamentally influenced by the variety and beauty of the forest landscapes.

As outlined in the Investment Priorities Section, the Lassen faces a significant backlog of deferred maintenance on existing facilities, roads, and trails. There is simply too much infrastructure to maintain given the current budget and expected funding trends. The Lassen must prioritize both administrative

and recreation facilities to be upgraded to meet health, sanitation, fire safety and accessibility standards. At the same time, the Lassen must be prepared to remove roads, buildings and other infrastructure that no longer meets the Agency's needs, are not in tune with the natural setting, present significant health and safety problems, or are too expensive to maintain. To protect fragile riparian and other areas, the Forest needs to improve heavily used recreation sites or restrict the use. It is unknown how many miles of unclassified roads and trails (including user created routes) are in the Forest.

### Challenges:

- Current budgets are not sufficient to bring all existing facilities, roads, and trails to an acceptable standard, nor construct new facilities to meet changing customer demands or reduce environmental impacts.
- The Lassen has completed its facilities inventory, but does not have a complete inventory of all unclassified roads, trails or dispersed campsites. Without comprehensive inventories, the Forest does not know where recreation use is occurring nor the extent of the impacts to make informed management decisions.
- Dispersed campsites and trails also require regular maintenance. With so many miles in between sites, it is difficult to achieve economies of scale and efficient management.
- Some recreation sites, roads or trails may also be the most cherished by the users preventing closure as a profit-oriented business might do.
- The lack of office space and temporary housing options are major obstacles to recruiting and hiring a skilled workforce. Without short-term housing, volunteer programs and temporary assignments are limited.

### Means & Actions:

- By FY 2005, develop criteria with which to evaluate all non-fee sites for the most cost-effective means of public service and resource protection such as decommissioning, using contract services, volunteers or other viable options.
- Explore opportunities for implementing a fee demonstration pilot program for the administration of recreation residence special uses.
- Implement the Forest administrative and recreation facilities, and trail system master plans by FY 2006. Complete comprehensive inventories by FY 2005; include maintenance schedules, and operational standards in these plans.
- Use the road analysis process to evaluate and identify designated OHV routes and open riding areas over the next four years. Involve the public throughout the planning process.

### Lassen National Forest Strategic Objective 3: Build Partnerships & Relationships

The Lassen's natural and historic resource programs focus on inventory, data collection, analysis and evaluation. More emphasis should be placed on education and interpretation in response to the public's desire for these kinds of learning experiences. The heritage program is a perfect example, in which numerous benefits are derived from public outreach such as the Passport in Time Program.

The Lassen will cultivate future prosperity of the Forest by focusing partnerships on funding investment priorities, improving operational efficiencies, restoring fire dependent ecosystems, and building community relationships. Since positive external relationships are one of Lassen's strengths, the Forest Leadership Team seeks to maintain and expand their existing partnerships. Staffing to engage and manage partnerships is the most limiting factor to increasing the Forest's partnership capacity.

### Challenges:

- Cooperative planning for recreation and ecosystem management is desired, but is time-consuming and often challenging.
- Establishing relationships takes time and commitment to fully realize the shared benefits. In today's busy world, these relationships within communities of interest are often not explored to the extent that they should be.

### Means & Actions:

- Expand partnerships with volunteers, non-governmental organizations, other agencies, and private sector business partners to maintain and improve Forest facilities. Pursue a private/public venture and issue a concession special use permit by 2005. Convert some non-fee sites to fee sites to maintain them in a more cost-effective manner.
- In addition to resolving the facility needs as outlined in the Investment Priority Section, the Forest will be researching possible synergies with local educational institutions for housing, recruitment, and training programs.
- By the end of FY 2005, finalize the Forest Land Adjustment Plan to identify key parcels for exchange or acquisition where the public is served.
- Explore and develop additional avenues of interagency collaboration to address some of the unfunded needs in this Business Plan and to achieve desired goals.
- Increasing the Lassen's capacity for partnerships was assessed during the business plan process. The Partnership Section explains this analysis further.

## Volunteers

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead,  
world-renowned anthropologist



Civilian Conservation Corp crews working on the Pacific Crest Trail on the Almanor Ranger District



Retired couples love to volunteer their time at the Hat Creek Ranger District

### Community Service & Volunteer Contributions at the Lassen National Forest in FY 2003 & Beyond

Volunteers with the Forest Service have a long history. While volunteer contributions to the agency were formalized with the passing of the National Forests Act in 1972, community members have been serving their national forests since the lands were designated as public assets over 100 years ago. In fact at the start of the last century, local citizens reported and helped fight wild land fires on a regular basis.

Today, volunteers make a contribution across all program areas and comprise a significant portion of Forest Service labor. The magnitude of volunteer contributions underscores the commitment of the public to their lands and the importance of their service. The Forest Service would not be the organization that it is today if were not for the help and generosity of the countless individuals who have contributed their time and energy over the last 100 years.

In 2003, volunteers contributed 8,663 hours of their time for the benefit of the Lassen National Forest. While many volunteers' efforts were concentrated in the areas of archaeology, recreation trail maintenance, administrative assistance and facilities repair, volunteers engaged in a host of other activities including:

- Landscaping
- Litter Removal
- Fire Prevention
- Conservation Education Programs
- Visitor Relations
- Hosting Campgrounds
- Cleaning
- Wildlife/Fisheries Inventorizing

As the Lassen prepares to celebrate its 100th birthday and begin a new century of public service, its staff is contemplating the past and future role of volunteers. Funding constraints require that

the Lassen utilize mechanisms to increase their organizational capacity at a minimal cost. A more comprehensive volunteer program is one way of accomplishing this.

During the BPI project, many program managers communicated the desire to use volunteers on a more regular and intensive basis. However, a more comprehensive volunteer program would require substantial administrative work, the level of which is not currently possible given 66 vacant positions and 36 additional unfunded FTEs in the Forest. A volunteer program that actively sought out volunteers for projects year round would require dedicated staff members to continually recruit, train and manage the corps. Perhaps more importantly, dedicated staff members are needed who can match volunteer contributions to specific program area needs. An efficient and productive volunteer program would directly address forest staffing and budget shortages. A volunteer program that is staffed, managed pro-actively, and integrated with forest budget and planning activities would equip the Lassen to expand their organizational capacity through volunteer contributions. This expansion would also make great strides towards mobilizing a public who is actively involved in the management of their lands.

Program Areas which have identified an immediate need and use for additional volunteer efforts:

- Vegetation Management/Noxious Weeds Management
- Watershed Management
- Wildlife, Fisheries and Rare Plants Management
- Heritage Resources Management
- Trails Maintenance and Monitoring – Adopt a Trail Programs
- Campground and Developed Sites Maintenance and Monitoring
- Public Information, Interpretation and Education
- Road Maintenance – Adopt a Road Programs

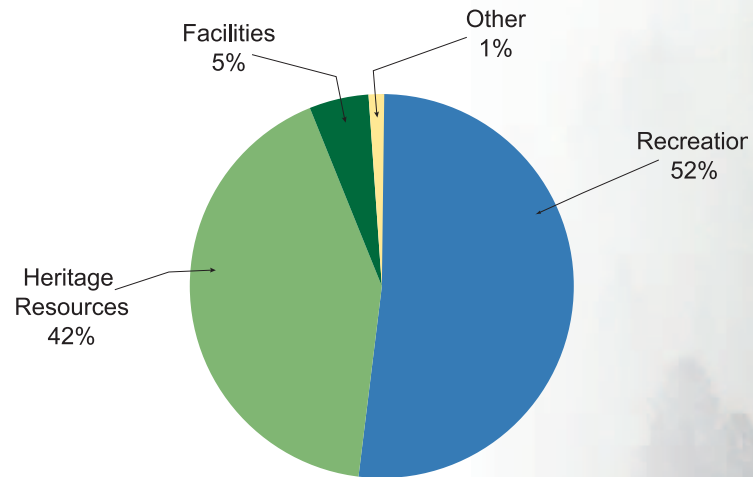
In FY 2003, the majority of volunteer hours were contributed towards recreation and heritage resources projects. The annual Passport in Time (PIT) project comprises a significant portion of the Heritage Resources Category.

In addition to Volunteer Programs, the Lassen National Forest also engages in a number Human Resources activities, which encourage community involvement. In FY 2003, the Forest sponsored the following programs:

### Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

SCSEP is a federally administered program designed to provide part-time or temporary work opportunities for low income persons who are 55 or older. Participants gain work experience and job skills through working on projects that provide a meaningful

## Volunteer Contribution by Program Area FY03



### Passport in Time Projects: Focus on Heritage Resources Volunteers

In the summer on FY 2003, the Lassen National Forest continued its long-standing tradition of facilitating public involvement in preserving archaeological sites. Through the Passport In Time program, more than 100 volunteers helped Lassen archaeologists record the history and prehistory of the area. PIT is a volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program of the USDA Forest Service that provides an opportunity for the public to work side by side with professional archaeologists on real management and research projects. Since its national debut in 1990, the PIT program has continued to draw increasing numbers of volunteers who contribute numerous hours of time towards the goal of historic preservation.

In FY 2003, the Lassen sponsored three PIT projects across the Forest. At the Eagle Lake Ranger District, volunteers hunted for emigrant camps associated with the Lassen and Nobles Emigrant Trails. The district archeologist and PIT volunteers concentrated on a site discovered some years previous that contained artifacts dating to the approximate time period of major emigrant use of the trails. Musket balls, square nails and various wagon parts were recovered.

At the Hat Creek Ranger District, PIT volunteers also searched for emigrant camps associated with the Nobles Trail. Here the district archeologist and PIT volunteers identified a major staging area for horse and oxen-drawn wagons as they traversed the rugged lava ridges around Hat Creek, slowly making their way west to the Sacramento Valley. Excavations at the site yielded oxen shoes, wagon parts, and even a fork left behind by an emigrant traveler some 150 years ago. The Almanor District archeologist led volunteers into an area near the Ishi Wilderness to continue excavations at what may be one of the oldest prehistoric sites in the region. This was the third excavation at this site, which has yielded important data on the aboriginal inhabitants of region.

During these PIT projects and those in the past, the work of the volunteers yielded valuable information that has helped the Lassen locate, analyze and protect its historic resources. The PIT projects exemplify the great interest shown by volunteers to get involved in the stewardship of their forest lands. PIT projects also underscore just how great a contribution volunteers can make to advancing resource management efforts.





Volunteers working on Nobles Emigrant Trail Passport In Time (PIT) Project 2003

contribution to their community. Participants receive federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher, and work 1300 hours a year or less. In FY 2003 the LNF hosted nine SCSEP participants who made a wide range of contributions across the Forest from administrative assistance to trail and road maintenance.

### The California Conservation Corps (CCC)

For this program the Forest Service serves as a host organization in conjunction with the CCC and provides work opportunities for the participants who are between 18-23 years old. Participants are paid minimum wage and engage in conservation work, community service and emergency assistance. The CCC participants benefit from job training and skill development and hands on conservation work. In FY 2003, CCC participants constructed a water bar on a section of the Pacific Crest Trail that was rerouted to provide a safer crossing across State Highway 36. Corps members also cleared the trail of trash and other debris, and groomed the trail tread to provide a uniform walking surface.

### The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)

The objectives of this program are to provide meaningful work opportunities and valuable job training and development programs for State wards, inmates, and residents of California Department of Corrections (CDC) Conservation Camps. The Forest Service serves as a host agent by providing worksites and training for enrollees. In FY 2003, CDC crews cleaned up non-hazardous remnants of the Panther Springs Work Station, pre-commercially thinned a stand of conifers, dismantled unneeded fences, removed noxious weeds, and assisted with a road decommissioning project.

### The Student Conservation Association (SCA)

In conjunction with the SCA, the Forest Service provides training, skill development and educational opportunities to SCA members in the principles and practices of resource management and conservation. Participants are high school and college students who have been selected by the SCA organization. Students work between 5 and 12 weeks during the summer and receive no salary. In FY 2003, the Hat Creek Ranger District hosted a student who contributed 500 hours to the archeology department. At the Almanor Ranger District, two students provided over 800 hours of service and developed a wildlife habitat enhancement project.

### Tribal Youth Conservation Crew

In partnership with the Susanville Indian Rancheria, the Lassen County Resource Advisory Committee, and the California Indian Manpower Consortium, the Forest Service hosted a seven person tribal youth conservation crew in the summer of 2003. Crew members ranged in age from 15 to 18, and worked on a variety of conservation projects under the supervision of Eagle Lake Ranger District staff. The crew's summer experience instilled an awareness and appreciation of the environment and allowed the Forest Service to complete needed work.

## Partnerships

### Assessment of Current Partnership Environment at Lassen National Forest

This section will focus on:

- Current efforts, capacity, environment
- Capacity framework: goals and recommendations for building capacity
- Highlight on a Lassen partnership
- Explanation and use of the Partnership Planning Manager (PPM) software tool

#### Introduction

Collaboration with key players is critical to an ecosystem management approach. Given that most landscapes are fragmented geographically, politically, and by ownership, cooperation across boundaries is essential. This consideration is embodied within partnerships such as Resource Advisory Committees (RAC), and Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) group, both which are collaborative management frameworks utilized by the Forest Service on a regular basis.

The Lassen National Forest has a long history of partnership activity. Partnerships have provided creative ways of solving public land management issues where consensus, synergies and community interaction were essential to achieving the most productive outcome. Partnerships have also been effective at strengthening community relations and broadening support for the agency's actions.

At the Lassen National Forest, the Pine Creek CRMP, the Mill Creek Conservancy and the Deer Creek Conservancy provide examples of how valuable across-agency collaboration can be. In conjunction with these partnerships, the Lassen has completed over 30 miles of fish habitat improvement and watershed restoration, working hand in hand with other governmental agencies, conservation associations and private landowners. These successes provide a template and standard for future work.



This state of the art dispatching facility demonstrates the interagency cooperation for responding to incidents such as fire, emergencies and natural disasters. The Lassen NF, Bureau of Land Management, Lassen Volcanic National Park and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection are partners.

One of the resounding themes that emerged during the development of this business plan was the desire of Lassen staff to engage in more partnership activity. In fact, many program areas identified partnership opportunities that were available to them, but which they were currently unable to pursue because of a lack of adequate resources. This constraint combined with the recently announced budget cuts for the Pacific Southwest Region through the year 2006 suggest that formalizing a partnership strategy for the Lassen may be one of the most valuable recommendations this business plan can offer. National and state fiscal crises further jeopardize sources of funding that have been integral to the Forest's work for years. For instance, the future availability of California Federal (CalFed) grants is uncertain and may depend on the success of additional bond issuances. Already, a Forest is more likely to receive a CalFed grant if they apply in conjunction with a partner because of the increased value of the federal dollar through matching grants. As these grants become more competitive, this preference is certain to intensify.

Lassen has completed over 30 miles of fish habitat improvement & watershed restoration, working hand in hand with other governmental agencies, conservation associations & private landowners.

In an attempt to position the Lassen to take full advantage of the partnership opportunities available to them, and to help prepare them for a fiscal environment that is less stable than that of today, the consultants facilitated a number of assessment exercises that would help the forest assess their organizational capacity for productive partnership development. The following sections highlight the findings and their implications.

### Recommendations for Lassen's Partnership Development Strategy:

1. Administer the Partnership Assessment Tool to program managers and current partners. This analysis should complement the feedback and enable a partnership strategy that more accurately addresses organizational capacity gaps and expectations of partners.
2. Develop formal funding incentives. A proportion of the funding a Program Manager is able to save/generate in one fiscal year through partnership activities should be awarded back to them the next year – so budgets – which are the most compelling internal driver, should reward the agency's commitment to this endeavor. (This will require regional and national support.) Recognition for partnership activity should be formalized and awarded along with other Forest Service noteworthy accomplishments.
3. Formalize the responsibility: Assign one person from each program area to handle partnership activities. Hire them with this intention in mind and incorporate their progress into their performance review.
4. Staff appropriately to generate partnership activity: This staff will coordinate forest level activities and provide support at the program area level. Assign one or two people to be responsible for maintaining and utilizing the new Partnership Planning Manager (PPM) software tool.
5. Develop an inter-agency partnership support group: This group should include program area partnership managers and the forest partnership manager. The forum will allow for the

exchanging of ideas, consideration of synergies, contemplation of new projects and overall support.

6. Adjust the budgeting process by addressing partnership activity that may not occur along traditional program lines. There needs to be internal accounting flexibility that supports collaborative activity. Also, the lag times associated with the federal budget process can hinder agencies from planning or participating in collaborative efforts. Furthermore, the annual budget process is not compatible with multi-year partnership commitments and agreements. The Forest Service loses credibility when a project's funding gets cut mid-way through a project. If funds that are to be committed to partnership activity could be obligated through a separate process, this would aid in the partnership recruitment immensely. (This will require regional and national support)
7. Augment the staff's capabilities and confidences with formal training. The National Partnership Task Force offers relevant tools and products.
8. Always assign multiple staff to a partnership relationship: This will minimize the negative impacts of personnel turnover.

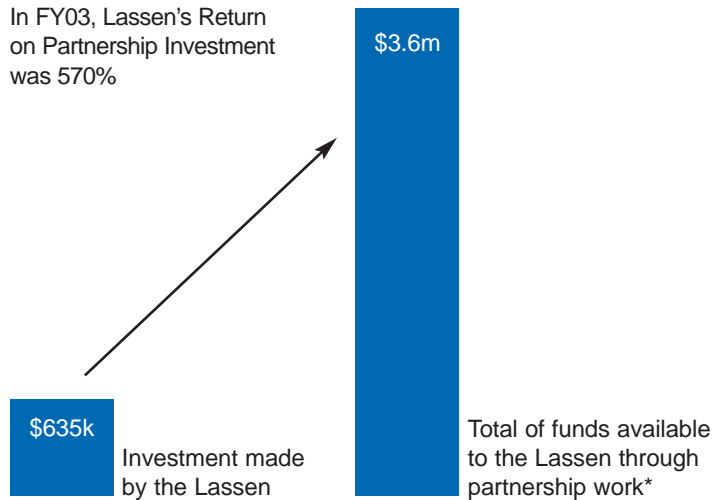
The following organizations contributed over \$3.6 million to the Lassen in FY 2003 for partnership project work.

Edge Wireless  
 California Department of Transportation  
 California Department of Water Resources  
 California Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division  
 California Department of Boating and Waterways  
 Chester Elementary, Junior and Senior Schools  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 Pacific Southwest Research Station  
 California Department of Parks and Recreation  
 National Park Service  
 Redding SnoRiders  
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
 Chico Research Foundation

Point Reyes Bird Observatory  
Sierra Cascade Snowriders  
Lassen National Park  
University of California at Davis

\*The graph below does not fully capture the value generated by pooled resources, synergies of resource management or the creation and development of collaborative relationships that may be used in the future. It also does not include Resource Advisory Committee, contributions nor those with the State and Private Forestry Program.

In FY03, Lassen's Return on Partnership Investment was 570%



## Highlights on a Current Partnership at the Lassen National Forest:

### Pine Creek Coordinated Resource Planning Group

Founded: 1987

**Mission:** To enable Eagle Lake Trout to swim up Pine Creek and spawn naturally.

**Members:** California Department of Fish & Game, Soil Conservation Service, Water Quality Board, Bureau of Land Management, University of California Extension Service, Ducks Unlimited, Eagle Lake Audubon Society, the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District, Cal Trout, major private landowners adjacent to Pine Creek, and grazing permittees.

**Funding Source:** EPA

### Major Accomplishments:

- 31 miles of Eagle Lake trout habitat have been improved: fish ladders have been built, new culverts under roads have been inserted, and water development work has been accomplished. At this time, there are no barriers keeping the fish from their spawning areas.
- In 1987, Eagle Lake Trout were being considered for Endangered Species listing. The work performed by this group has satisfied the concerns of USDI Fish and Wildlife Service. The Eagle Lake trout have remained on the Regional Foresters' Sensitive Species List as the Forest manages the habitat for sustainable species viability.

### Notable Aspects of the Partnership/Success Enablers:

- The farm advisor from the California Extension Service has served as the project leader. His objective perspective has enabled the group to work together in an amicable and productive fashion. The farm advisor embodies expertise in facilitating change and modernization with ranching practices and has brought relevant experience to the effort in addition to objectivity.
- The District Ranger at the Eagle Lake District has been committed to this project from the onset. He has also been willing to take the risks necessary to make a meaningful contribution to the partnership. This dedication and approach has been a crucial source of support for the staff members who have handled the partnership management.
- Each member of the partnership had a strong interest in either the fishery or the cattle: all were served well by coming to a mutual agreement.
- The Forest Service has put in the time necessary to make this project a success including writing the Environmental Assessment and performing continual monitoring at the creek. This has been essential, as these actions have legitimized the work of the group.

### Challenges:

- Since 1993, the Forest Service has been abiding by the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. At times, the guidelines of this document were viewed as limiting by the other group members.
- There have been a number of Forest Service staff assigned to this project since its inception – this has hindered continuity.
- The group operates with a consensus decision making model – this has led them to a stalemate at times.

### Areas for Improvement:

- The Forest Service had planned to lead a host of educational activities in conjunction with the group's work. This plan has suffered because of vacancies at the District level. Plans to sponsor a booth at the county fair and place a kiosk at the fish hatchery have never been realized.



Creating a diversion of water into historic channel on Pine Creek

# Lassen Workforce Recruitment/Retention Strategy

This strategy seeks to address the high vacancies, turnover and attrition rates at the Lassen. The current 66 open positions and 20-25 percent attrition rate are negatively impacting the operational capacity of the organization and their ability to engage in pro-active management. A recruitment/retention analysis strategy contemplates the need to research and identify current practices and procedures that may be contributing to the instability of human capital. The strategy will also address the implications of an aging baby boomer population, which affects the Lassen.

Addressing the human resources situation at the Lassen is particularly important in light of their commitment to developing a formalized partnership strategy. Staff continuity is key to fostering productive collaborative relationships.

## Current Situation:

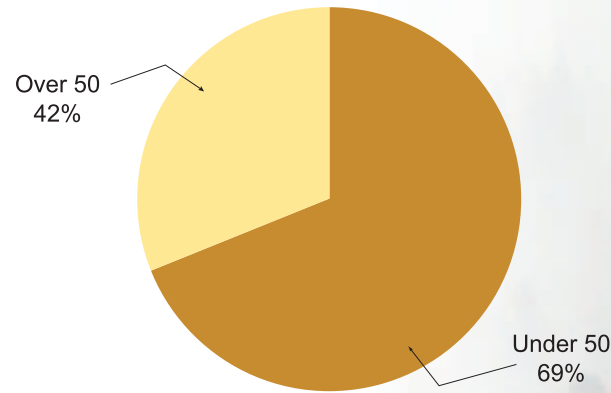
Program	Vacancies	Average # of Offers Made for Each Position Filled	Approximate Cost to Fill a Position*	Average Turnover Rate**
FAM	30	2-3	\$1,619	25%
All Other	36	1-2	\$3,147	20%
Forest Wide	66	Average of 2	\$1,619- \$3,147	22.5%

\* It requires approximately 129 hours of labor to fill a non-fire-staff position at the Lassen and 68 hours of labor to fill a fire-staff position. This calculation does not include the cost of benefits to these employees or the opportunity cost of time.

\*\*Average agency turnover rate is between 10-15%.

Ranger District	Vacancies	Percent of Workforce
Eagle Lake	7	10%
Almanor*	26	39%
Hat Creek	10	15%

## Current Age Distribution of Permanent Employees



\*The Almanor District has the greatest facilities needs including office space, barracks and a warehouse. The current lack of funds to make these investments is directly impacting their workforce.

## Current Age Distribution of Permanent Employees:

With almost a third of the current workforce over the age of 50, there is the potential for a significant number of vacancies in the next five years. An analysis is needed that identifies by year, and program area, how many employees will be eligible for retirement. The analysis should be used to build a strategy that will mitigate the effects of a wave of retirements.

## Lassen Recruitment Concerns:

- Lack of a qualified applicant pool in surrounding communities.
- Lack of adequate temporary housing and office facilities.

Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) in particular suffers from:

- Competitive municipal and state salaries (LNF FAM salaries are generally much lower than that their counterparts.)

Some of the challenges facing the FAM recruitment and retention process are driven by external factors that can not be controlled at a forest level. For instance, differences in salaries between the Forest Service and other firefighter agencies.

The Lassen has committed, through their investment priorities, to address the facilities needs that are affecting recruitment and retention. This is most relevant for the FAM organization which does not have adequate barracks or office space. A workforce strategy will employ resources that do not require external funding.

**Proposal: Engage in a forestwide workforce recruitment/retention analysis that addresses the following:**

1. Analyze Retention/Recruitment trends by program areas and positions. Are there trends that relate to the conditions of a certain job function or functional area? Is there a disproportionate rate of turnover at any one of the district offices or in any program area?
2. Are there ways the recruitment process can be streamlined and improved so that the hiring process is not as lengthy or cumbersome?
3. How can the recruitment process be more targeted and successful? Are the right candidates being identified through the current hiring procedures? Is the Lassen marketing themselves adequately to candidates? Beyond traditional outreach efforts, does the recruitment process provide a comprehensive representation of life as a Lassen employee? Would acceptance rates be higher if the hiring process was more personal and involved more contact between parties?
4. How can diversity within the workforce be addressed? Beyond Regional mandates, how can the Lassen improve their percentages and representation?
5. What will be the impact of retiring baby boomers at the Lassen? Over the next five and ten years, who will retire and when? Which program areas will be potentially affected the

most? How can the LNF start addressing the potential knowledge deficit now?

6. Why are recruitment and retention bonuses not utilized more often? In the last two years not one request to offer them has been turned down, but Lassen only awarded two retention bonuses and one recruitment bonus last year. Taking greater advantage of this capability should be encouraged.

In addition to formalizing and instituting a recruitment/retention plan the LNF should set goals that will enable them to address their human resources needs in a pro-active and engaged manner.

**Goals:**

1. Improve the interview skills of all supervisors to identify and recruit highly desirable candidates
2. Strive toward a 100 percent job offer acceptance rate.

**Tools:**

1. Institute and require recruitment training for all supervisors and program managers.
2. Conduct up front entrance interviews at the conclusion of the recruitment process to provide insight into how the Lassen can better present themselves during the recruitment process.
3. Use exit interview data more vigorously to evaluate retention concerns.
4. Involve Human Resources in the qualitative evaluation of candidates.
5. Develop a mentoring program that will pair younger staff with the experienced staff.

Cultivate the next generation of Lassen employees by working with local schools and colleges to address development of skills appropriate to the Forest Service.

# Acknowledgments



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Bizz Johnson Trail in the Fall. This multiple use trail is a partnership between the Lassen and the BLM.





Fire crews using backfiring practices on the Cone Fire September 2002



Many people enjoy fishing from the banks of Deer Creek on the Almanor Ranger District

## Lassen National Forest



Soldier Creek on the Almanor Ranger District



Families enjoy spending time on the paved trails along the south end of Eagle Lake



Winter is a great time to get out and enjoy snowshoeing